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FIFTY-TWO SERMONS,

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FIFTY-TWO SERMONS

ON

THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT,

THE CREED,

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS,

AND OTHER

IMPORTANT SUBJECTS OF PRACTICAL RELIGION;

BEING ONE FOR EACH SUNDAY IN THE YEAR.

BY SAMUEL WALKER, A. B.

LATE OF EXETER-COLLEGE, OXFORD; CURATE OF TRURO, IN CORNWALL, &c. &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

NEW EDITION;

CORRECTED AND REVISED

BY THE REV. SAMUEL BURDER, M. A.

OF CLARE-HALL, CAMBRIDGE; AND CHAPLAIN TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUKE OF KENT.

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SERMON XXVI.

LECTURES ON THE CHURCH CATECHISM.

GALATIANS iii. 24.

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

THE main purpose of this epistle is to show that justification is not by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ. In handling this point, he answers divers objections made to his doctrine; and, among others, this (ver. 19 of this chapter): *If the inheritance be of promise, wherefore then serveth the law? It was added, because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made.* It was given because of sin, to make it known, and so, by shewing the want of a Saviour, to dispose the hearts of those who were under the law for receiving that Saviour whenever he should make his appearance. This he explains more fully afterwards in the text, calling the law *our schoolmaster to bring us unto*

Christ; by *the law* he means the whole law of Moses, moral, ceremonial, and judicial; and he insists that the great design of the whole Mosaic dispensation was to bring us to Christ, *that we might be justified by faith*. Now those parts of this dispensation which were *ceremonial*, having had their end, are ceased; they were *the shadows of the good things to come*, that is, of Christ, who was ever the substance of them all, and, whenever the Jews are called in, these ceremonies will not be restored; for since the appearance of Christ they have no more use, as is fully argued in the epistle to the Hebrews; and accordingly from the establishment of his spiritual kingdom, and destruction of the Jewish polity, they are entirely laid aside by divine authority, however they have been and are the great occasion of stumbling to the Jews.

But then, with regard to that part of the law which is *moral*, it still remaineth, because the need and the use of it are the same. It serves now, as it did always, to give knowledge of sin, and so by humbling us to bring us unto Christ for justification through his merits; and, in consequence thereof, for power from him dwelling in us, to fulfil in truth, though not in perfection, that righteousness which the holy, just, and good law of God, enjoins and exacts from us.

It is in this latter sense I shall take the words, inasmuch as we have no concern with the ceremonial parts of the law; and I will endeavour to show you how the commandments of God, when applied to the conscience, serve as a schoolmaster to bring us to

Christ, by discovering to us our sinfulness; inasmuch as the commandments of God exact of us a holiness, which (however God the holy Governor of the world can require no less) yet is such as we have not, do not, and cannot perform; therefore must be beholden for mercy through the obedience of him who alone has fulfilled the righteousness of the law, and was made a sacrifice for us. It is in this manner we are taught by the church to which we belong to apply the law, when, after hearing every one of the commandments, a petition for pardon is put into our mouths, *Lord, have mercy upon us!* and that we may obtain a deeper sense of our needing mercy, as transgressors of God's law, I shall now enter on a consideration of the commandments, one after another, in this view.

And this, I conceive, will be a suitable employment for these Sundays in Lent: for which reason I purpose to go no further with them than this season will allow me. If God spare my life, and continue me among you, I may possibly resume and complete this design another year.

We are to begin with the first commandment.

Thou shalt have none other gods but me, or before me.

And here I will show what it is this commandment enjoins, adding and intermixing such inquiries and remarks as may by the divine blessing serve to humble and bring us to Christ.

The four first commandments require us to worship God with the inward worship of the heart and the

outward worship of the life; which last is really nothing but formality, if the heart be not given up to worship God as this first of all the commandments requires it should be.

In general, then, this commandment requires we should know God. Know him we cannot truly and fully as he is, *For canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection**? Nor can we know any thing of his spiritual nature and perfections, unless he reveal himself to us. But this he hath done in his word, and from thence we may learn to discern him in his works and ways. The Scripture gives us an account of the *one God existing in a trinity of persons*; that he is a *living Spirit*, having life in himself, and not from another; that his life is *unchangeable and eternal*, ever living and ever the same; that he *lives every where*; that to this everlasting Spirit belongs *almighty power and unerring wisdom*; that he is *holy altogether*, being incapable of willing any thing but what is perfectly right: that this living Spirit is *the Maker of the world*, in which are manifest his boundless power and matchless wisdom; that he *continues the world and every thing in it in being*, himself upholding all things by his power, and maintaining every thing in the state it is in by his presence; that he *rules every thing according to the purposes of his holy and upright will*, making every thing, even the most jarring

* Job xi. 7.

oppositions of men and devils, serve his wise and holy ends; that he *governs us by a Redeemer*, in whom, to display his own glory, are evident the unchangeableness of his holiness, the riches of his goodness, and the abundance of his wisdom and might; finally, that this living God *will be eternally the same*, his purposes shall never change, his doings fulfilling without ceasing the councils of his will from all eternity.

Now since this knowledge of God, as he hath revealed himself, is the foundation of all true spiritual worship, or giving the heart to him, I propose to your inquiry, and as the ground of deep humiliation, Whether you have been using all diligence in seeking to know God? He hath fully revealed himself in his word for the purpose, and that word he hath ordered to be ministered unto you; you have not wanted means and opportunities: but will you say that you have improved them as you ought? Have you not been careless in the matter? Not given your mind to know God? Have you not disliked to have God in your knowledge? Or been drawn aside from seeking to know him by the various things of life? Or hearkened to the sinful dulness of the flesh, not bestirring yourself to hear and search the Scriptures, with continual prayer that you might be directed into the knowledge of God?. To this inquiry after your *diligence*, let me add, Have you experienced *humility* in searching after God? Have you come always to hear and read the word with a meek and tractable spirit, desirous only to be taught, ready to believe

whatever God should say to you? Have you never read the word or heard it *curiously*, with a desire to pry into God's secrets; *proudly*, merely to inform your head and make you wiser than others; *arrogantly*, ready to dispute what you could not comprehend? Have you never questioned the certainty of any of God's declarations, or disputed in your heart the justice of his determinations, or found yourself wishing that God were even such an one as yourself, that you might find his word corresponding with your vain and carnal fancies and humours? Let me ask, whether you be not this day, as to any thing that deserves the name of knowledge, very ignorant of God? You may have got a speculative knowledge of God; so had Eli's sons; for it cannot be supposed they were destitute of all knowledge of God, and yet it is said of them, "They were sons of Belial, they knew not the Lord;" that is, whatever they knew of him, it had no good effect upon them; they did not regard him as God in their hearts, were unmindful of and forgot him. And may not this be said of you in one degree or another? Whatever you may know of God, do not you, many of you, live without him in the world—your hearts as regardless and unconcerned about him as if you had never heard of him? Do not you contrive some how or other to forget him day after day? yea, do not whole days pass over your heads, wherein you do not so much as think of him? I will venture to ask, whether there be not some of you who have not really thought of him even now, since you have been here in his house? And all of

us, are we not reproachfully ignorant and blind to the knowledge of God in comparison of what we ought to be? How little do we see of his wisdom, power, and goodness, in his works and ways? How forgetful often of his presence? How inobservant of his providences? How regardless of his judgments, mercies, calls, and warnings, so constantly besetting us? Let me inquire again, whether your knowledge of God has been such as to abase you as it ought in your own sight? Alas, that ever man should be proud! such a thing, yea, such a nothing, yea, such a worse than nothing; such a crawling worm, such a sinner, such a criminal, such a child of hell! O that ever the reason of man should be debased to such a degree of ignorance as that man should be proud! Yet proud we all are by nature, setting ourselves up above all that is called God, saying to him, *Depart from us*; what, or who, is God? Look back and see what you have reckoned yourselves; look in and see what your wretched hearts would needs have you conceit that you are! O, my brethren! have our hearts learnt the infinite difference there is between God and us—his excellency and our baseness, his power and our weakness, his mercy and our misery, his rich grace and our spiritual poverty? Have not our hearts yet much to learn of this lesson? Do we yet so know God as to know ourselves? O when shall it be that we shall be lowly in our own eyes, as becomes the creatures of the high God, the sinners against the most glorious Sovereign of the universe,

the poor, miserable, helpless, perishing wretches we are, saved only by infinite mercy and almighty grace?

And now, after this inquiry, shall I need ask, are you guilty or free in this matter? The duty of the knowledge of God, doth it condemn or acquit you? I need not wait for an answer, I am persuaded every mouth is stopped; not one dare say, ‘ Lord God, I have known thee, I have sought after thee, I do know thee as I ought to do.’ If your mouth open, it can only be in that cry which alone becomes fallen man, “ God be merciful to me a sinner.” Brethren, I suppose you may have often wondered, when you have heard me making so little account of your best performances, that I would not allow there was any thing in them which could in the least deserve God’s notice; that I have been so constantly calling on you to put off your rags, and clothe yourselves with Christ’s righteousness. Now what think ye of the matter yourselves? There is not a soul among you who is not miserably condemned in the very outset; not one of you that knows God as he ought to know him, and as God requires we should know him. And, if the fountain be thus impure, can the waters issuing from it be clean? A true knowledge of God is the whole of religion; as much as this is defective, all the rest must be so of course; and, if we have sinned here, we cannot be innocent any where else. This will be more evident in the more particular consideration of this practical knowledge of God which will be illustrated in all the commandments.

But for the present I am to confine myself to the first, and to shew you more distinctly the things that are included in the practical knowledge of God in the heart, which this commandment requires of us. And they are these three—to *put the whole trust in him*, to *love him with all the heart*, and to *fear him only*. You will easily observe that were there in our hearts such a knowledge of God as the Scripture revelation proposes to us; were our hearts duly sensible that the living, eternal, almighty, wise, holy, merciful God was ever present with us, we could not but trust in him always, and in every case without fear; esteem, desire, and delight in him with all our souls, ready always to please him, and waiting always on his pleasure; fear continually lest we should dishonour him; in every thing we do, in every thing we enjoy, in every thing we use, fear only lest we should displease him. These are but parts of a true practical knowledge of God. Were that in the possession of the heart, these would be necessary fruits of it; and therefore, where these are wanting, we must be said not to know God. But let us come to a more particular consideration of them. And the

First of them is *trust*. The Scripture account given of God above was, that he is an almighty, most wise, and unchangeable Spirit, living every where, disposing every thing, and most mercifully disposed towards his sinful creatures in Jesus Christ. The knowledge, therefore, we ought to have of God is, that in the Redeemer he is an almighty and most merciful Father, ever present with us, ever able, and

ever ready to do us good. He reveals himself in this manner, and would have us trust in him, that is, not to trust in any thing else, not to distrust him, but to rely quietly, assuredly, and satisfiedly on him, in all cases, temporal and spiritual. Wherefore, to trust in God is not to distrust him, nor to trust in any thing else. Let us see now what answer we can make to this, in respect of things temporal and eternal.

In respect of things *temporal*, have ye put your whole trust in God? In your *prosperity*, have ye put your whole trust in God? Have you never made *gold your hope, or said to fine gold, Thou art my confidence**? Have ye never thought your safety consisted in the abundance of things which you possessed? In the midst of your abundance, have you had as much dependence on God for your daily bread as if ye had not known where to get the next morsel? See whether in truth there has not been the very reverse of this. You have been full, and have denied God, did not find your want of his providential care, did not ascribe all to his bounty, did not live on the promise that he would care for you, did not humbly and constantly acknowledge, with a becoming sense of it on your heart, that you received all from him, and held all at his pleasure. And do you thus trust God this day, you that have your tabernacles in peace, and eat bread to the full? It is the hardest part of

* Job xxxi. 24.

trusting in God, when we are in the possession of his favours, especially when we seem to be in any established possession of them; we are apt insensibly to forget who gave and who continues them to us, and our deceitful hearts to withdraw their confidence from God, and repose a great part of it at least on the creatures God hath given us. This not trusting to God in prosperity is the greatest inlet to worldly-mindedness, and the true reason why it is so very difficult for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. And if you have failed here, if you have not trusted to God in prosperity, have you not also distrusted him in *adversity*? When crosses met you, when distresses fell upon you, were you not ready to put your trust in man or money, or schemes and contrivances of your own, without referring yourself to God? And when perhaps (having found no other resource) you have referred yourself to God in your worldly difficulties, have you not still distrusted him, conceived unworthy fears as if he had forgotten, or were not able, or were not careful to do for you what was best? Have you not still been doubting and impatient? Where then was your trust in God? Why surely his hand was in all your difficulties, and he presided over them; but you could not believe that, or did but half believe it; you could not trust him. Have you not on these occasions been doing like the Israelites, and with a base, defective, limited faith and trust in God, crying out, in their spirit, *Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? Can he*

*provide flesh for his people**? Or when you would put your whole trust in God, and leave the matter on his hands, was there yet no wavering and staggering, no fear and doubt, no restless wishing and longing you could see an end of your distress? And then again, in the bodily afflictions sent on you, have you always quietly rested on the will of God? What! was there never any murmuring, never any impatience, never any thing like saying to God, Why hast thou thus dealt with me? Never any mislike of God's doings, never any fainting under the burden, never any leaning to other helps separate from him, never any thinking it long, never any hasty calling on God to fulfil his promises? But you are ready by this time to say, Why you expect of us the perfection of saints in heaven. No, I am only explaining to you what trusting on God is, and helping you to see how far short you have come of it, and that with this view, that your pride may be confounded, that ye may be sensible you are just nothing but miserable sinners, and so, laying aside all pretences to merit in yourselves, you may betake yourselves to him, who alone is worthy and able to save, with much shame in yourselves, and with deep sorrow for what you have committed. O that I could so preach the law to you, and the curse annexed to every transgression of it, as to drive you all to the arms of the Redeemer for refuge!—But again;

* Psalm lxxviii, 20.

In respect of things *spiritual*, have ye put your whole trust in God? Have ye never had any leaning to your own righteousness, conceiting you were something when you were nothing? Or to your own strength, saying with Peter, “I am ready to follow thee, though all men deny thee?” Have you never mistrusted God’s promises in Jesus Christ, conceived hard thoughts of God’s dealing by you, apt to ask, Why hast thou suffered me thus to be tried and tempted? “Why go I thus heavily while the enemy oppresseth me? Why dost thou hide thy face from me? Where are thy old loving-kindnesses?” In the various dispensations of the Spirit which your soul hath known, have you never grown confident, and said, in your heart, “I shall never be moved?” Or grown impatient and displeas’d that things were no better with you, instead of being thankful that you were any thing at all? Have you never trusted on good frames when you have enjoyed them, ready to make them your Christ; or repined under bad ones, ready to conclude God had forsaken you? Have ye never presumed, never been secure, never said, I shall see good, though you were walking in the imagination of your heart? In short, can you say you never trusted on any thing else but God’s mercy according to his promise; that you never mistrusted that promise; that calmly and confidently, in all cases, whether comforted or afflicted, you put your trust in that only? O that you were come to this now at last, that you could say this day, “*I have no confi-*

“ *dence in the flesh*, no confidence in any thing I do,
 “ any thing I am, any thing I am capable of! Thy
 “ mercy, that is sufficient for me; under the shadow
 “ of thy wings shall I be safe; I know thou art able
 “ to keep me, in life, in death, in judgment, to
 “ everlasting thou art able to keep my soul, which I
 “ have committed to thee, and I desire none but thee
 “ to support me; thou art my all-sufficiency, I wait
 “ on thy will, my soul hangeth on thy arm, do as
 “ thou seest best, dispense to me what thou pleasest,
 “ try me as thou wilt, use me as thou seest fit, my
 “ trust is in thee, I leave myself with thee, I have
 “ no longer a will of mine own!” O that you could
 say this with sincerity this day! But, alas! how far
 short do we all come! How distant is this from what
 the most of you can say with any truth!

On the whole, are we clear in this matter? Have
 we put our whole trust in God in every case of soul
 and body? Now if we have not, if we have trusted
 in any thing else, we have robbed God of his all-suf-
 ficiency, ascribing it to the creature; if we have mis-
 trusted him by uncomely doubts and fears, we have
 reproached his mercifulness, questioned his faithful-
 ness, suspected his power, and denied his promises.
 See how much sin there is in not trusting in God!
 See how much sin there is in our wretched hearts!
 O! when will our mouths be in the dust?

And what say you now, brethren? Are ye not
 glad ye have a Saviour and Intercessor at God's right
 hand? Are you for his righteousness or your own?

Your own, alas! What? Where is it? O be careful that the sense of your own nakedness bring you to lay hold on the righteousness of God.

I reserve the love and fear of God to another opportunity. Mean time try your hearts, and humble yourselves in the sight and sense of your sinfulness, who have been this day convinced both that you know not God as you ought to know, and also that you have not put that trust in his name which his word requires of you. And may the Lord enable you so to humble yourselves now, that you may be exalted in the day of the Lord Jesus!

S E R M O N XXVII.

GALATIANS iii. 24.

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

THE moral law of God, the Ten Commandments, it was proposed to consider as serving the purposes of a schoolmaster, in bringing us unto Christ, by making known our sins to us. Sin is the transgression of God's law; and, if we are all chargeable with this transgression, we have all cause of humiliation. If *every transgression and disobedience received formerly*, and hath still annexed to it, *a just recompense of reward**, the deep meditation thereupon must needs enforce us to *flee for refuge to the hope set before us* †.

It was in these views that the Ten Commandments were to be taken under consideration; and the first of them was entered upon the last Lord's day. In speaking to which it was insisted upon and shewn, that a practical knowledge of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as revealed in Scripture, was the whole

* Heb. ii. 2.

† vi. 18.

of religion. And after some inquiries concerning our diligence, humility, and success in seeking after this knowledge, we proceeded to a more particular consideration of so much of that practical knowledge of God as falls under the first commandment. And this was said to consist in the three great duties of *trust*, *love*, and *fear*. The former of them was then dispatched; and I come now to speak of the second.

Secondly.—Therefore, *Do we love, and have we loved, the Lord our God, with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength?* This a practical knowledge of God implies, and, as far as we fail herein, we come short of knowing God. That we may be the better able to bring our hearts and conduct under examination on this important inquiry, discover our great and shameful defects, and so find plenteous matter of humiliation and supplication for mercy, it will be needful you be fully advised of the account the Scripture gives us of God, as eminently entitled to the love of our whole heart. The love of God is the heart's uniting itself to him as its sole happiness, and that from a discovery made in the mind, that he is an happiness infinitely desirable. And that God is an happiness infinitely desirable is made manifest by the revelation he hath given of himself in the Scriptures. They give us such an account of God and of his dealings, that we cannot but see every lovely perfection abiding in him. How lovely is that glorious Being in whom is infinite power, influenced by infinite goodness, and guided by infinite wisdom; who, infinitely blessed in the enjoyment of himself, needing

nothing, and incapable of receiving any addition to his happiness, at the mere instance of his all-gracious mind, formed not only the powers of heaven, but man on earth, providing for him a noble habitation, furnished with every thing fit for convenience or use; who hath yet more plenteously exhibited the richness of that good will which dwelleth in him, in the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ! Such is our God; a blessed Being, whose excellencies challenge the choicest affections of our heart; to whom to be united as the great fountain of happiness is the duty and blessedness of every reasonable creature; in whose favour is their life; in whose presence their joy is full. It is easy to see, that to seek for happiness in the creature rather than God, to have the heart united to it rather than him, is at once the highest affront offered to God, and the saddest injury done ourselves. Well may God expect we love him with all our heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, being such as he is, and we so obliged and bound to him as we are! But have we this done? or do we it now? For the more easy resolution of which inquiry, it will be needful to observe, that the heart's loving God, or uniting itself to him as its sole happiness, implies these three things:—

First.—The highest esteem of him.

Secondly.—The most ardent desire after him.

Thirdly.—The placing our whole delight in him. Thus to esteem, desire, and delight in God, is to love him; to make him our happiness. And if we have also done so without reserve, valuing, desiring,

and delighting in other things only as they have reference to God, we may boldly say, we have loved him with all our hearts. Let us see now if any of us can be bold to say, we have done, or do this.

First.—Have you *esteemed God as your chief good, your only sufficient happiness and portion?* I appeal to your own conscience. Have you been always sensible in your heart, that the enjoyment of God's favour and presence would make you completely blessed; that, this enjoyed, nothing would be wanting; no circumstances would make you in the least unhappy? Have you always found, or do you now find, such a fulness in God, that, God enjoyed, you could lack nothing? Is this really the fact? How low then your esteem of every thing beside; how incapable have you always seen every earthly thing to make you happy; how little value have you set on the esteem of men, the interest of the world, and the enjoyments of life! But hath this been your case? Have you not esteemed these too much and God too little? Whence is it otherwise that, to please men, you have so often made compliances dishonourable to God? that you have so continually conformed to the debauched manners of the times, and the humours of bad company? Whence is it otherwise that, when your worldly interest hath been at stake, your holy resolution hath so often failed you, you could not act and speak with that freedom you were wont, and you felt so much fear of disobliging? Whence otherwise, that in the enjoyments of life you have so often forgot yourself, abused your time and your

talents in them, been so dull without them, and so happy with them? Whence all or any of this, but that your heart had conceived too much value for these earthly things, and too little for God; hath esteemed the praise, interest, and enjoyments of life, to a degree which evidently show you have not esteemed God as your only all-sufficient happiness? It is plain your heart must have expected some undue happiness from them, since you have in this manner sinned against God for the sake of them. Or do you now esteem God as your only portion? Can ye say this day with the Psalmist, *Thou art my portion, O Lord**? What! Can the glutton and the drunkard, whose god is their belly, say this? Can the covetous person, whose god is mammon, say this? Can they who are in friendship with the world, time-servers, men-pleasers, sons and daughters of Pleasure, say so? Every one who hath set up his idol in his heart, whatever it be, can he say, *The Lord is my portion*? All such have evidently taken to themselves other gods to serve them, and that because they expect happiness from them; not one of those persons doth or can esteem God as a portion. And all of us, have we hewn to ourselves no broken cisterns? Are we got, as we ought, above the esteem and value of every earthly thing? Do we regard them all with an holy indifference, because of that satisfaction we have in God, as an alone and most sufficient happiness?

Whence is it, then, that our hearts are so ready to care for the morrow; to meditate and plan schemes for earthly happiness; to be overpleased with prosperity; to be so anxious about futurity; so fearful of every appearance of worldly inconvenience and loss? Whence, I say, is it that our wretched hearts are so apt to be careful about the morrow, and bring even on the most advanced Christians so much painful watchfulness and self-denial to keep them in any tolerable measure of content and mortifiedness concerning worldly things, unless it be that there lies lurking in the bottom of them a certain expectation of happiness from these things of the world, which at least shows we come very short of esteeming God as our all-sufficient happiness?

Secondly.—Have you always had, or have you now, *a most ardent desire after God?* That is, after his favour and presence, as alone capable to make you happy? Have you always desired God's favour? If so, you have ardently sought after it with the whole bent of your soul, and without intermission; your soul athirst for God, for the living God: but hath this been really the case, and always the case? Have the things of the world never diverted your pursuit? Have you never lost sight of this blessed object? When you were young, did your heart experience no desires after pleasure and vanity, which, if they did not (as is most likely) render you entirely regardless of God's favour, did at least repress the ardour of your desire after it? Or, since that time, hath not the care of the world hindered you? Have you all

along used the world in such a manner, as that you have not abused it, so as to become forgetful thereby of the great design of your life? Should you even be able to say, that all along this hath been your aim, from your youth up until now, are you also able to add, you have been desiring God's favour with all your strength, with an ardour and earnestness suited to the importance of the thing to yourself, and the condescension of God in offering his favour to you? Alas! how cold-hearted, how lukewarm, how lifeless have you, sometimes, shall I say, or always, been? The lovers of this world, how have they left you behind in the eagerness of their pursuits? The lovers of pleasure, unweariedly intent upon vanity and folly, how have they reproved your remissness in seeking the divine favour? O! how much weariness and fainting, how much slumbering and sleeping, have you known? If you have run well a little, have you not been tired quickly, and out of breath, and ready to give over? And then what way have you taken to God's favour? Have you never run unlawfully in your own strength and righteousness? The way to God's favour is but one to us sinners, and that is, the Redeemer, who claims to himself the prerogative of being the *Way*; and insists, that no one cometh to the Father but by him. Have you therefore sought and desired God's favour, as always and ardently, so humbly, as a sinner should do? What! Did you always look upon yourself as a poor miserable sinner, who in yourself had not the least pretence to God's favour? Did you never conceit you were good

enough to deserve something, and able enough to do something? Hath Jesus been always your strength and righteousness, while you have been seeking to be, or continue, in the favour of God? What! Hath it been by prayers, and watchings, and strivings, and self-denials, and constant perseverance and patience; and yet, by disclaiming all manner of merit in all this, leaning only upon Christ, that you have been desiring and seeking God's favour? And then, if you have been ardently desirous of a sense of God's favour, you will have taken all due care not to lose what you had attained of it. But have you been duly careful herein? Have you never grieved the Spirit, or neglected means, or slighted warnings, or ventured into needless temptations, or neglected known duties? Also hath your desire and care to please God in all things been expressive of all desire of his favour? It is impossible you should be setting a high value on his favour, and yet regardless whether the things you do please him or not. Have you then been careful to please God only, whomsoever else you might displease? Hath it been always your study to do his will; and have you never consulted your own? Have you been continually waiting on God, in the spirit of converted Saul, asking, "*Lord, what wilt thou have me to do* *?" Have you never considered your own humour, inclination, ease, pleasure, or interest, saying at all times, and in all cases, in opposition to

* Acts ix. 6.

flesh and blood, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? I am content to do it.

Such as these are evident consequences of an earnest desire after God's favour as our happiness; and, as much as we have failed in any of these, we must allow ourselves to have come short in the love of God; and who can say that he hath not failed? or who that he doth not come short? What hath been hitherto advanced must be insisted on to have been, and to be, more or less, the case of those who can say with truth, in the generality of their conduct, "Our desire is to thee, O God, and to the glory of thy name." And what then must be the case of such as have no desire after God's favour at all? How must they be condemned as not lovers of God? The lovers of this world, whose desires rise no higher than this base earth, and whose views are all confined to this side the grave, how must these be condemned? And I fear, yea, I doubt not, it is the case of many among you. My friends! there are among you such as live without God in the world; and, what is the strangest thing in the world (if any thing in corrupt nature can be strange), have not the least desire after God's favour, though you know in your consciences you shall perish without it. You may indeed be ready to say, that you do desire his favour. So you may, as far as desiring he may not punish you will go. But to say you desire God's favour as your happiness, this you cannot say with any truth; for every day convinces of the contrary. The happiness you desire is merely a worldly one, and therefore you do not de-

sire God for a portion. And since you will have your portion in this world, I cannot see how you can so much as expect the favour of God, since you do not so much as desire it. O that you would consider how every moment you are living in a breach, and that an allowed one, of God's law; while, awake or asleep, at church or at home, you are found not to desire God's favour! And has it not been always thus with you? Have you not been always children of this world in the desires of your hearts? If this hath been and is your case, I beseech you deceive not yourselves by any appearances. Be you as liberal, chaste, sober, honest, exact in religious exercises, as you will, it is plain your heart is not in the way of God's commandments, for you desire not God's favour as your happiness. O! consider this, while yet there is time; while you may have God's favour, consider this, lest he pluck you away, and there be none to deliver you.

What I have been now saying, concerning the desire of God's *favour*, I might say over again with regard to the desire of a sense of God's gracious *presence*, for it is impossible to desire the one without the other. He that desires God's favour must needs desire his presence, wherein alone here and hereafter is found the actual enjoyment of his favour: and whoever desires God's presence must needs desire his favour, without which his presence would be terrible. Nevertheless, I will suggest a short inquiry on this point, that you may see how far short you come in your desires after God. Hath your care to walk in the sense

of God's presence manifested a due desire after it as your greatest present happiness? You have sadly forgotten God, you own; you are sadly apt to do so to this hour. But are you sure this is not owing to some carelessness on your part? Have you been enough diligent to obtain a sense of his presence with you? Or, when you have obtained that sacred communion, have you been diligent to maintain it by seasonable meditation, by frequent ejaculation, by constant employment of yourself in some appointed work? Have you not carelessly lost sight of God in vain conversation, in trifling levity, in abused recreations? If so, where then was your ardent desire of God's presence, when you could so easily miss it for want of a little reflection, or be content to part with it for vanity and amusement? It is well if some do not wilfully put God out of their minds, running purposely into company and riot to lose sight of him and themselves. It is well if others be not advised so to do, lest the thought of God should make them melancholy. Alas, my friends! do we desire to see God in heaven? Surely that place will be no heaven for us if we do not. But if we do, if we reckon on God's presence there as the great joy of that blissful mansion, how comes it that some so wilfully, and others so heedlessly, forget God? that we have all so much to blame ourselves for, in our little care to walk with God? We desire not God's favour but exactly in proportion as we desire his presence. Judge therefore how cold your desires after God have been; and remember that he who can truly say, "I have none

“ in heaven but thee,” can say with equal truth, “ There is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.” I go on to the other point.

Thirdly.—Have you *always delighted, or do you delight, in God as your chief happiness?* This delight consists in a certain calm, steady, and rational complacency in God, as an all-sufficient happiness, the soul resting on him as every way excellent and satisfying. The commandment requires we should thus delight in God, that we should do so at all times, and that we should delight in nothing else as our happiness; and we have seen that God is every way a suitable object of this our delight and joy; because in himself he is every way excellent, suited to be such a satisfying happiness to his rational creatures; and hath revealed and proposed himself to us of the world in this view. But, now, have or do we thus delight in God? It supposes two things, that, under the sense of God’s presence with us, and his fatherly direction of us, we have always enjoyed a contented and thankful frame of spirit. But hath our soul been always in this contented and thankful state? or, if composed, hath this composedness arisen only from a full satisfiedness in God? How far is this from the case of any of us! Some to this day do not so much as know what I am speaking of; are quite strangers, as they have always been, to this joy in God; perhaps would be ready to dispute whether there is any such thing, at least any possibility of so being content and thankful in God in certain seasons of worldly distress. And which of you hath always thus delighted in

God, and that in such a measure as to possess always a contented and thankful spirit? Have we never been discontented and dissatisfied? Have we never been unthankful? Whence else have we been so ready to complain? Whence have we so often fallen into, or perhaps lived long in, an unthankful mood, peevish, fretful, and displeased with every thing, forgetting all God's other favours because one was taken away or wanting? And what was that one thing wanting, at the bottom, but satisfiedness in God? Say have you never been discontented and unthankful? What! in no case? What! not when you have been disappointed of that you had set your heart upon; when you have thought yourself ill used by your friends; when you have met with difficulties in your worldly affairs; when you have been sick; when dangers public or private threatened you; when your schemes have not answered, or have been delayed: or when you met with great and trying temptations; when you were evil-spoken of; when you were suffering for righteousness in your character or interest; when your soul did not thrive as you would; when your corruptions were strong, and, as it were, let loose upon you; when you seemed to gain little ground upon them; when disorder hindered you from the free exercise of prayer, meditation, and the like; when death or Providence took away your friends; when infirmity or age was growing upon you? In all cases have you been content and thankful? And, as far as you have seemed to be so, hath it been only because of your satisfiedness in God? Hath this been

your only joy when things have gone well with you ; and this your only refuge when things have gone amiss ? The most of the joy in the world is plainly a carnal joy, a joy springing from youth, health, easy circumstances, cheerful companions, worldly gratifications ; have none of these things been in part, or the whole, the matter of your supreme joy ? Religious joy is a rare joy ; but carnal joy there is enough and too much of. *Eat, drink, and be merry*, this joy abounds ; but, *When the fig-tree doth not blossom, when there is no fruit in the vine, then to joy in God** is a favourable token of our submission to his will. If we can rejoice in God, and be content and thankful in adversity, how pleasant is it to delight in him in prosperity !

Thus I have opened to you the great duty of loving God ; and I need not ask whether you be guilty or not. Our happiness is, my brethren, that God hath provided a ransom for us in Jesus Christ. But let none think that propitiation sufficient without more ado, lest he abuse my design and his own soul ; I mean not to give any the least room for security, while I show that all are guilty. I would have you all, with deep humiliation, with self-loathing and shame, betake yourselves to Christ. And I declare, in the name of God, that whoever doth not thus, with humble acknowledgment and confession of his vileness, lay his sins on the head of Jesus, his sins shall be on his own head.—There is yet the fear of God to be spoken of, which must be deferred to our next meeting.

* Habak. iii. 17, 18.

S E R M O N XXVIII.

GALATIANS iii. 24.

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

I AM now to speak of *the fear of God*, in correspondence with the design of the text, to stir you up with deep humiliation to betake yourselves unto Christ for mercy.

God, considered in his divine majesty, as the absolute Sovereign of the world, is the object of fear. And inasmuch as his kingdom reacheth unto all, and he is every way qualified to maintain the glory and the rights of it, he must be entitled to the highest fear from all his creatures. It is God's wisdom, power, justice, and sovereignty over all creatures, which render him the object of all fear. So the Scriptures speak; they represent God's *wisdom and knowledge* as a foundation of fearing him: *Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him? saith the Lord: Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord**. And again, *All things are naked and open*

* Jeremiah xxiii. 24.

to the eyes of him with whom we have to do*. So the power of God is set forth as a motive to fear: *O foolish people, and without understanding, fear ye not me? saith the Lord: Will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it †?* Also because of his justice he is to be feared; *If ye call on the Father, who, without respect of persons, judgeth according to every one's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear ‡.* Lastly, because of his sovereignty over all creatures, God is to be feared. *If I be a Master, where is my fear? I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the Heathen §.* Yet however God, by reason of his wisdom, power, justice, and sovereignty, be the object of all fear, yet he is not actually feared but when he is considered as present: in which view Job saith, *Therefore am I troubled at his presence; when I consider, I am afraid of him ||.* And the Holy Spirit gives us to understand, by the mouth of Joshua, that God manifests himself in *miraculous doings*, to the end *that all the people of the earth may know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty; that ye might fear the Lord your God for ever ¶.*

Now though God be the object of all fear, by reason of his glorious majesty, yet he will be differently feared by his reasonable creatures, according as they

* Heb. iv. 13.

† Jer. v. 21, 22.

‡ 1 Pet. i. 17.

§ Mal. i. 6—14.

|| Job xxiii. 15.

¶ Joshua iv. 24.

are differently disposed towards him, and have or have not an interest in his favour. The blessed angels and perfected saints above, conscious of his favour towards them, and their love towards him, have a fear of God, which is most properly a high reverence of his majesty and perfections, possessing their spirits with a most awful approbation of his government, with the most pleasing submissions thereto, and with a most perfect detestation of whatever is contrary to it; and this is what is figured out to us by the angels being said to cover their faces before the Lord*. Again, on the other part, the inhabitants of hell are possessed with a fear of God's majesty, which is full of horror, because they have both the utmost detestation of his government, and lie under the immediate fury of his wrath, which also they are conscious they shall never escape, because they are sure he will never be reconciled to them. *The devils believe and tremble* †. In like manner the fear of God will be various upon earth, according as men are conscious that they have, or have not, an interest in his favour; if the interest in God's favour be sure, and love of God more advanced, the fear of God will have more of that heavenly reverence, and less of that tormenting apprehension, just spoken of. If there be no interest in God's favour, and the conscience is awakened to see the danger of our state, the fear will be agonizing to us, even approaching to the dread of devils, perhaps void of all reverence, and big with hatred and

* Isaiah vi. 2.

† James ii. 19.

dislike of God's power and majesty. Yet two things must be noted for the clearing this point.

First.—That since we are now in a state of trial, our fear of God may not, and cannot, advance to such a degree of heavenly reverence, as excludes all apprehension of God's future judgments; for this were to cut off one of the two great motives to the practice of religion. Christ teaches us to have respect to the wrath to come, that we may flee from it, as well as to the recompense of reward, that we may obtain it: for he saith, *Fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell**. And it is plain St. Paul had respect to it, when he saith, *Lest that by any means I should be a castaway †*.

Secondly.—That there can be actually no fear of God, where there is no sense of God's presence on the heart. *There is no fear of God before the eyes of the ungodly*; because such persons *have not God in all their thoughts*. The reason is, that now God waits on them with great mercy and forbearance, and they lose sight of him in their carnal enjoyments, while he withholds his fury from falling on them. But in the world to come it shall not be so; there the soul of the saint shall be ever full of reverence, because God shall eternally communicate a most delightful sense of his presence to it; and there the soul of the sinner shall ceaselessly tremble, because God also shall be present with it, pouring out the fury of his indignation upon it.

* Matt. x. 28.

† 1 Cor. ix. 27.

From the whole we may easily collect, that the fear of God in man is not such an angelic reverence, as if we had never sinned against him (for in this respect there is a difference between angels and saints even in heaven; the saints never forget they were sinners, though the remembrance be without pain or fear, yea, rather with a humility that enlivens all their praise and joy); or as if we were now perfect, or were delivered from all the pains and penalties which the justice of God hath annexed to sin; but it is such an apprehension and veneration of God's wise, mighty, and glorious majesty, as makes us jealous for his glory, and fearful of his displeasure: and this both as we have offended him, and lest we should offend him.

I.—As we have offended God, this apprehension and veneration of God's majesty should keep alive upon our hearts a due and deep concern for his glory, which we have thereby injured, and for his displeasure, which we have thereby incurred.

First.—*A deep concern for the glory of God's majesty*, which we have injured by our sins. We cannot be supposed to have any veneration for God's majesty without this. Let us see how a concern for God's glory in such a case doth express itself.

First.—*In godly sorrow.* Peter, as soon as he had denied his Master, *went out, and wept bitterly**; for what did he weep, but the dishonour he had done his Master? It was that which pained and grieved his

* Matt. xxvi. 75.

heart. O what a monster did he think himself! and have we loathed ourselves and humbled ourselves in godly sorrowings, whenever we have dishonoured God's majesty by our sins? Whence is it then that so many of you have committed, and too many of you still do commit, the most deadly sins, the sins of swearing, and drunkenness, and filthiness, and sabbath-breaking, and feel no concern about it, find no shame upon the matter before God, if ye take to yourselves any shame before men? Whence, like the sons of Sodom, are you bold and hardy to do what you list? Alas! with insolent disregard of God's majesty, you say in your hearts, *Who is Lord over us?* While you sin without fear; yea, make a mock at sin, and despise the fear of the Lord. Thanks be to God! you are not all thus without understanding; yet all of you, how disproportionate have been your sorrowings to your sins? Have we not all reason to complain of the hardness of our hearts, that we have dishonoured God so much, and loathed ourselves so little?

Secondly.—*In justifying God's majesty in the sentence that he hath denounced against sin, according to that humble language; That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged**. Now have we justified God in his sentence against us? And have we always done thus? Hath the veneration we have had for God's majesty made the curse he hath pronounced against us appear equi-

* Rom. iii. 4.

table to us? Have we never secretly questioned the justice of it, or complained of its severity? Many are doing this openly, and insisting that the righteous God will not, or shall not, thus deal with his creatures! Many do so openly; but if you have escaped this insolence, have you never done it secretly, either questioning whether you were not so righteous as to deserve God's favour, or disputing whether his curse justly belonged to you, or conceiving hard thoughts of him concerning it, or murmuringly demanding in your heart, *Why hast thou made me thus?* So charging your sins on God to justify yourself. Have you always lain down under the stroke of justice, giving glory to God's adorable majesty, and saying, from the full conviction of your heart, *It is of thy mercies, O Lord, that I am not utterly consumed; thou hast done right, but I have done wickedly. O enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no flesh living be justified!* Will you venture to say you have thus acquitted and justified God in your heart in all and every one of your sins, without murmurings and without disputings?

Thirdly.—*In a quiet submission to God's corrections.* Have you always acquiesced in the justice and ever-mildness of them, that they were less than you deserved; saying, *Righteous art thou, O Lord, and just are thy judgments! Thou art righteous in all thou hast brought upon us! Why should a man complain for the punishment of his sins?* Brethren, have we never forgotten God in the matter? or complained with wicked Cain, *My punishment is greater than I*

can bear? or been ready to curse the day that we were born, with Job? Have we always owned, “Thy judgments are just, when the desire of our eyes hath been taken away at a stroke,” when our prospects have failed us, our friends have been taken from us, when we have been left destitute and forsaken, when God’s visitations have fallen thick upon us, one following in quick succession upon another? In all cases have we been quiet, nor asked God, *What dost thou?* adoring his majesty, and giving glory in the bottom of our hearts to his justice? The too-common way is, we provoke God by our sins to punish us, and then quarrel with him for doing so. O where is the reverent veneration for God’s just majesty, while we are fretting against all his dispensations which do not suit our humours; sinning with a high hand, and with as high a hand refusing to be corrected; murmuring, impatient, angry, as if God were doing us wrong, as if he had no right to do with us as he pleases, as if by our dutiful demeanour we had a claim upon all his favours! A right apprehension of, and veneration for, God’s majesty, while we see what sin is committed against it in the world, should make us rather admire there is not more misery sent down among us, than repine there is so much: and he who is acquainted with God’s glorious sovereignty, and his own manifold transgressions, hath no cause to startle at the prospect of that wretchedness he has to go through in this vale of misery; at the pains, sicknesses, death, which he sees waiting for him. But,

Secondly—As we have sinned against God's majesty, our hearts should be impressed with *a due concern about his displeasure, which we have thereby incurred*. But now let us see what concern we have had, or yet have, about God's displeasure against our sins.

First.—Have we not been, or are none of us now, secure in our sins? David could say, *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments**; but hath it not been, or is it not our language still, *Soul, take thy ease, eat, drink, and be merry?* Have we never acted as though we had made a covenant with Death, and put away the evil day far from us? If we have not refused the fear of the Lord more or less, even to turn with all our hearts at his reproofs, whence is it we are all such poor scholars in that wisdom which the fear of the Lord would have taught us? or whence have so many of you this lesson all of it still to learn, after all of us have passed through so many calls, warnings, providences, and judgments? May we not all say, we have been shamefully secure about God's displeasure at our sins? My brethren, let conscience be consulted. Are there none among you this day who have cause to say, "I am stupid, I am senseless; fool that I am, I live as if God were not able to punish; as if my forgetfulness should stop the course of God's vengeance; I live as easy as if I were sure God was reconciled to me, and death,

* Psalm. cxix. 120.

“ come when it will, should certainly convey me to
 “ Abraham’s bosom ; and yet I am sure, as I am that
 “ I live, that death, should it come (and it is coming,
 “ it is striding up towards me), that should death
 “ come now, (I cannot but tremble at the thought !)
 “ it would take me away, and hurry me, alas ! not
 “ to Abraham’s bosom, not to the paradise of God,
 “ not to the blessed place where there are pleasures
 “ for evermore, but (and can I any longer be easy at
 “ the reflection ?) to misery, and flames, and tor-
 “ ments ! Yes, death, should it now come, would
 “ carry me at once without delay, without hope,
 “ without mercy, to that dark and dreadful place
 “ where dwell the devils and all the cursed of God
 “ for ever, and I to dwell among them also for
 “ ever !”

Secondly.—Hath our concern about God’s displeasure, by reason of our sins, driven us to God’s mercy in Jesus Christ ? They are few who have so much concern about God’s displeasure against them, for their sins past, as to come to Christ with an honest and true heart. There are none, indeed, who would not choose to be happy, and they would be glad if Christ would make them so, but it must be on their own terms ; he must dispense with their forsaking sin, with their self-denial, and taking up the cross, and leading an holy and an heavenly life, else they will be excused. They have not so much fear of God’s displeasure as this comes to. They will hold it out a little longer ; they will rather run the risk of all that God can inflict than submit to these hard Gospel

terms. What I am saying is no new or strange thing. It is as old at least as the days of Christ, when, we are told, *Many went back, not able to endure such hard sayings**; and it is no strange thing to one and another of you here present, I doubt not: yea, we all know it, in some degree, by experience. The very best have found it no easy matter to part with all for Christ, whatever apprehensions they might have had of God's displeasure. But,

Thirdly.—Supposing you have betaken yourself to mercy in the Redeemer, are you to have no concern about your past sins? Yes, surely. I said above there will be an humbling remembrance of sin in heaven; and I say now that the best saint upon earth is not at liberty to forget his past sins. I am sure neither David nor St. Paul did so: and that to keep them humble, to enliven faith, to excite love (according to that of our Lord, *He that hath much forgiven will love much* †), to stir up praise, thankfulness, and redeeming the time. And do we, or have we as we ought, thus concern ourselves about past, and, I suppose, now forgiven sins? Who will say this? Who will say it for so much as one hour? It is not fit we should be terrified about past sins when we are come to Christ; but it is fit we should remember the displeasure of God under which we then lived, the dishonour we did his majesty, the danger we brought on our souls, and the grief we brought on the soul of Jesus. This is a part of a religious and child-like

* John vi. 60, 66.

† Luke vii. 47.

fear of God; and I leave you all to judge if you do not come short in it. Yet,

Fourthly.—Fear of God's displeasure by reason of past sins is often slavish, and that is very contrary to the fear we are now speaking of; and peculiarly dishonourable to God as a merciful, as well as righteous, Governor of the world. This slavish fear hath no concern about God's displeasure simply considered, but about the punishment which is the consequence of sin, and of that displeasure. A good child will be sorry he should have done any thing to deserve his father's displeasure; a selfish slave regards not how any are affected by what he hath done, but what he is like to suffer. This latter is a bad fear, and contrary to the duty we are speaking of. Yet if your greatest concern upon the review of your sins is, or hath been, that you may not be punished; if you mean nothing but yourself; if you are not ingenuously grieved, but only frightened at the thought that God should be displeased with you; if you could be easily enough reconciled to have sinned, could you be sure God would never call you to account for your sins, yours is a slavish fear; and it argues that you have not any veneration for God's majesty, nor child-like concern about his displeasure against you: this was the fear of Adam after he had sinned, 'I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid.'—It is time now to pass on to the other branch of the fear of God, having spoken sufficiently of that concern which a due apprehension and veneration of his awful majesty, as we have offended him, should preserve in us.

II.—The other was, that such a fear of God as makes us jealous of his honour, and fearful of his displeasure, *should keep us from offending him and displeasing him.* Now such a fear of offending God implies these four things :—

First.—An absolute detestation of all sin.

Secondly.—An actual rejection of all evil motions in our hearts.

Thirdly.—A watchfulness against all temptations.

Fourthly.—An holy care not to dishonour God in the use of any of his good creatures.

First.—Have we not cause of humiliation, and of crying unto God for mercy, in that we have not had a greater detestation of sin? To hate sin is the great fruit of a true fear of God: for as a true fear of God is a most high veneration of God's majesty, and a most awful apprehension of God's displeasure, so, where this is, there cannot but be an entire hatred of all that sin which dishonours God's majesty and incurs his displeasure, and is the only thing that can do so. Wherefore there is no such thing as really fearing God without detesting and loathing sin, and this of whatever kind it be. Sin will be absolutely and universally hated, wherever the true fear of God is. Indeed, the love of sin is consistent enough with a slavish fear of God; nay, is what is a main cause of that slavish fear of punishment. God would not be dreaded, were not his government hateful; and it is a love of sin only can make it so. We shall need therefore look well to it, that we absolutely hate from the bottom of our hearts all evil ways, all sinful prac-

tices, and all sinful tempers, and all the sinful motions to the one and the other that are in our nature, else we have not the true fear of God in us. It is easy to apply this. The carnal mind, with all worldly and proud affections and lusts, have they always been hateful to us, and hated by us, as they ought? Who hath not found some longing after the flesh-pots*? or who hath so perfected holiness in the fear of God, as to be able to say, *All false ways I have utterly abhorred* †. Were this the case, how comes it that the catalogue of our actual sins is so large, and that we have all so much to confess and to be forgiven? Would our debt have amounted to so large a sum, had we actually, absolutely, and duly hated and abhorred all evil ways? No. The love of them was at the bottom too much, and the fear of God too little, in the many sins we have to answer for. When we at any time indulged intemperance, was there not the love of the flesh? When we made compliances through fear of men, was there not the love of praise? When we truckled to the humour of some one we had expectations from, was there not the love of the world prevailing in us? Doubtless, we have not feared God as we ought; and I wish there may be any true fear of God in the most of us now. In such case we shall quickly see many sins laid aside which are now in practice among us; and therefore in practice because we love them.

Secondly.—Have we actually rejected all evil mo-

* Exodus xvi. 3. † Psalm cxix. 128. Old translation.

tions in our hearts? This is but a consequence of the other. And the reason why I make a distinct head of it is, only to have it more distinctly noted; because a watchfulness over our hearts, and a ready rejection of whatever evil motions are raised there by the body of sin, is the best and only certain sign of a true hatred of sin, and consequently of a true fear of God. I stop not to ask, whether you have never indulged evil motions in your heart? lustful, worldly, proud, or malicious imaginations? This is but too certain; but I observe that such motions, improved into evil imaginations and thoughts, by the consent to, and delight of, the heart in them, are both the nursery of all outward sin, and in themselves so many actual sins before God; who perfectly knows the inward parts, requires truth there, and plainly discovers that in such cases there is a great defect in the fear of his holy name. It was the fear of the heart-searching God that made David so earnestly pray, *Prove me and examine my thoughts, look well if there be any way of wickedness in me* *. And we must see to it whether there be in us such a holy fear of God as makes us watchful over our deceitful hearts, that are continually, like a muddy fountain, sending out some filthy thing or other; and whether we be ready to put our hand to the knife, and slay all such evil motions in the birth. If so, God will say of us, as he did of Abraham, *Now I know that thou fearest me, seeing thou hast not withholden from*

* Psalm cxxxix. 22, 24. Old translation.

me thy most beloved inclinations. O that sinners would but cast their eyes on their hearts one hour, and see what evil motions prevail within them in so short a space! they would find at once that they knew not the fear of the Lord.

Thirdly.—Hath the fear of offending God made us watchful against all temptations? As much as the fear of offending God possesses our hearts, it must needs be, we shall not willingly run any risks of doing it. And needlessly we run risk of offending God, when needlessly we run into temptation. Now hath God nothing to lay to our charge on this score? Few have at any time fear enough this way; and none have been always enough watchful against temptations. Some indeed court sin, run wilfully into temptation because they love sin, else certain places would not be frequented as they are. And where then in such persons is there any fear of offending God? What! Doth the drunkard fear offending God, when he runs wilfully to the alehouse; or the lewd person, when he betakes himself to the brothel? Is there any fear of God in the heart of him who will be a companion of those who fear him not? This hath been, and is, the case of too many of you. And of whom in some degree hath it not been the case not to fear temptations?—Alas! the more we search our hearts and ways, the more abundantly we find the multitude of our sins increasing upon us. But,

Fourthly.—Hath a holy fear of God kept us from dishonouring him in the use of any of his good creatures? This is a peculiar branch of religious fear;

and is what is meant by doing all things in the fear of God. And it is the more to be noted, because in things allowed we are most apt to be off our guard: It is to no end I should ask careless persons if they have not been without this fear, since they always are so, and know not the difference between the use and abuse of an allowed thing; asking only if there be any harm in it, while they make it ignorantly harm to themselves by their abuse of it. But to more serious persons I observe, there is not one of the necessities or comforts of life which we shall not sinfully abuse, unless we use it in the fear of God. Our sleep, refreshments of meat and drink, our time, our friends, our books, our children, our every thing is capable of sinful abuse, by being used to indulgence; not in the fear and to the glory of God, but to self-pleasing, and to the hinderance of necessary duties. I beseech you all to bring yourselves under examination upon this point; you will all find plenteous matter for humiliation from it. It is a great thing to be able to say, "I have used this world, in the allowable things thereof, as not abusing it."

Thus much of the fear of God. Apply what you have heard, and the Lord give you understanding for Christ Jesus' sake!

S E R M O N XXIX.

GALATIANS iii. 24.

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

I HAVE spoken fully of the first commandment, with a view of shewing you what the law saith and expects, and that, unable to answer its expectations, we might humble ourselves, and betake us to Christ. And now I will enter upon the second commandment with the same design.

The first commandment enjoins a practical knowledge of God, or giving the heart to him in the dispositions thereof. And this is the life and substance of all the following commandments, which are only kept in proportion with the devotedness of heart to God which there is in keeping them. More particularly we can only worship God, as our hearts are acquainted with a love and fear of him, and trust in him. Without something of this all worship can be but formality: we can neither pray, nor hear, nor wait on God in the sacraments with any spirituality; so these must be lifeless services, unprofitable to us, and not honourable to God.

This second commandment requires us to worship God; and the worship of God must be according to God's revealed will. Now the Scripture requires we should worship God in a reverent use of prayer, the word, and the sacraments.

At present I will speak of the sacraments, reserving the other two for another occasion. And these are two, *baptism* and the *Lord's supper*; concerning which I will only suggest some needful inquiries respecting the use we have made of them, and those such as I hope may be of service to such of you as are now to approach the Lord's table.

Let it be remarked, once for all, that there are four things needful to a right performance of religious worship:—

First.—Sincerity, from a simple desire to please God in our worship, because he requires it at our hands as a means of our honouring him and profiting ourselves.

Secondly.—Diligence, which is an earnest striving to stir up and maintain the graces which are requisite to worship, and to profit by it.

Thirdly.—Faith, which is a believing that God will accept us in our worship for Christ's sake, and bless it to us.

Fourthly.—Reverence, which is a due impression of the majesty of that God with whom we transact.—Let us see for the present how far we have walked in these rules concerning baptism and the Lord's supper.

First.—With regard to baptism, how this sacrament

is the instrument of admission into Christ's family, by which the baptized person becomes entitled to Gospel benefits, and voluntarily engages for Gospel duties; namely, that mortification of sin and holy living which are represented by washing the body with water, and which St. Peter calls *the answer of a good conscience before God**. See, then, since we came to years of discretion, have we been *sincere* and true to our baptism? Did we immediately, on coming to those years, claim the benefits it gave us a right to, and discharge the engagements it laid us under? Who will say this of himself? Who will say, from the hour he was capable of it, he has always respected himself as a child of God's family, valued as he ought the relation, and faithfully hath walked as a dutiful child of his heavenly Father? Will you venture to say, you have been thus sincere with God in his covenant, at no time starting from it? Or are you now sincere? Alas! how many are unfaithful, not claiming their privileges, and disregarding their duties? in whom sin even now reigneth, and to this day unwashed from their iniquity! To sincerity, let me add an inquiry about your *diligence* in this baptismal transaction. Have we been diligent to make our calling sure; diligent in seeking the grace of God; diligent in stirring up the grace that is in us; diligent in the use of all instituted means; diligent in living to God, in mortifying and dying to sin; in short, diligent before all things and as we ought in our spiritual and

* 1 Pet. iii. 21.

covenant work? Also, have you been *believing*, that is to say, trusting with all confidence on God's faithfulness to make good whatever was promised and engaged for to you, when you were baptized into the sacred Trinity? Have you not rather regarded your baptism as a matter of form with which you had little concern; or negligently undervalued and forgotten the privileges you were admitted to in baptism; or at best not failed often and much in claiming those spiritual blessings in time of need, which God had so kindly engaged himself by that institution to make good to you? To speak the truth, we have almost lost sight both of those benefits and engagements which this divine ordinance seals between God and us: baptism stands for a mere cipher; I may ask, who hath any *reverence* for it? or where is it shown? Is there any thing of that sacred reverence which is due to a divine institution shown when we bring our children to it? From one end to the other, do we treat it as a sacrament? Is not the chief care to procure sponsors who may be able to bear an extravagant and needless expense, and then to entertain them in such sort as, to say the least, doth very ill become the devoting a child to God's service, and that absolute renunciation made, in the child's name, *of the pomp and vanity of the world, together with the carnal desires of the flesh, so as not to follow or be led by them?* Is there not much cause to fear that on such occasions we forget the vows which are on ourselves; and do but little act the baptismal covenant in our own persons, when we bring others to it, and solemnly pledge

our care for their godly education in it? Or is this the only time when we do not reverence our baptismal engagements and privileges? It is a saying among the Turks, "What! a musselman, that is, a professed servant of Mahomet, to do this!" And it hath been a sufficient answer of old, in time of temptation, "*I am baptized.*" But what regard have we in general to our baptism? It is renounced every day by the neglect of the most that have been sealed with it, who live in an utter contradiction to it, slighting God's ways, and keeping in with the world and the flesh, so serving the devil. And I would God any of us had been without blame on this score. But,

Secondly.—With regard to the Lord's supper. Now this I hope you are sensible is such a remembrance of the death of Christ, as that while therein we receive him to us, we renewedly by that receiving surrender ourselves to him as his disciples, in a living union with him, and in a loving fellowship with one another. Now if the design of this institution be to seal Christ to believers as an all-sufficient Saviour, and them to Christ as loyal servants and faithful disciples and believers, one to another as fellow-members and fellow-servants; if such be the communion of saints with Christ and one another, by a solemn institution of our Lord's own appointment for the purpose, it will be seasonable to ask, in view to the approaching ordinance, and I leave you to make application for the time past,

First.—Are you *sincere* herein? That is to say, are you truly desirous that Christ alone be your Saviour,

because you find an utter insufficiency in yourself, and an all-sufficiency in him to help you in every need of your soul, whether respecting your guilt, or the sentence of the law, or the power of corruption, or the force of temptation, or the deceitfulness of your own heart, or the vigilance and artifice of the devil, or the work you have to do, or the shortness of your life, or the approach of death and judgment: for any or all of these things do you desire sincerely help from Christ, giving glory to him as alone able, and mightily able, to save you; and saying with Peter, *Lord, to whom should I go? thou hast the words of eternal life? And I know and am sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God* *. Also are you sincere in this, in determining that Christ alone shall be your Master? Doth he who knoweth all things, even the secrets of your heart, read there the unfeigned characters of loyalty for his service, and zeal for his honour and interests? that, loathing, and exceedingly ashamed of yourself for your past unfaithfulness, you are come now to him with an honest and true heart, earnestly hoping, and steadfastly purposing by his grace, that never more you will be ashamed of him, or deny him, or betray him, or sell him for interest, or reputation, or friends, or life?— Can you say also with truth, from the bottom of your heart, that you are ready to all offices of love towards Christ's members and *your* fellow-members? Can you cheerfully eat this one bread and drink of the same

* John vi. 68.

cup in token of your brotherly affection ; and as your pledge that you will gladly do all in your power to promote their greatest interests ; and that you are ready to receive all their kind assistance for the edification of your own soul ?

Secondly.—To sincerity have you added diligence in this matter ? Are you come prepared ? Have you examined and judged yourself that you might not be judged of the Lord ? Is Christ precious to your soul ? Do you long to taste of his goodness ? Are you come with an hungering appetite to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man ; diligently having sought out your wants and his fulness ? Is your desire keen after his pardoning, quickening, and comforting grace ? Have you been diligent too in trying your ways, in lamenting your iniquities before him whom you have pierced ; in stirring up all your graces, and putting on the wedding garment ? Have you beheld the man till you have mourned, till you have believed, till you have loved him ? Have you thought of all the wonders he hath done, of all the wonders he hath done for *you*, how he hath plucked you from the hands of the enemy, and led you, and taught you to go, and kept you from falling, and lifted you up when you were down, and to this day with almighty power and care delivered you ? Of the wonders he hath yet to do for you have you been mindful—wonders in grace and glory ? Have you meditated on all his kindness, till your heart, big with praise and thankfulness, is impatient to come before him in this not the least testimony of his love ; to come and tell

him of his wondrous doings, and to devote yourself, your whole self, soul, body, and spirit, to him, as a too-little return for his wonderful love? And would you think it worse than death ever any more to part from him, to deny or disgrace him? But more, have you been diligent that your love of Christ might be enlarged to all his people? Have you been earnestly seeking that all prejudices might be done away, and to have your heart taught the gracious tenderness of a Christ-like affection, so that you can say, *You love not in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth**, and trust that Christ shall own you by this mark to be his disciple?

Thirdly.—Are you come also in faith? Have you considered attentively who hath spread the table, and what are the provisions which are set before you? Do you see Christ under these signs of bread and wine; and are you come to feed your heart and eyes in this representation of the dying love of Jesus? You have weighed his own words, *This is my body which was given for you, and this is my blood of the New Testament which was shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins.* And what, do you verily believe, it shall be even so as he hath said? Only believe and the thing is done. Faith discovers a crucified Jesus in the representation here made of him; faith makes the promise a living word, and feeds on the body and blood of Christ in the power of the promise; faith looks to Jesus at the right hand of God,

* 1 John iii. 18.

is assured of his power to fulfil his engagements, and of his faithfulness to his promises, and draws out of him a feast indeed, to the establishment and refreshing of the soul. Are you believing, therefore? In spite of all your manifold past iniquities, in spite of all your infirmities and spiritual poverty, in spite of whatever trials and discouraging appearances, do you believe that there shall be an accomplishment of the things which have been spoken? This is to deal with Christ as a faithful and powerful High-Priest, and to enter into the heart of his design in leaving behind him this pledge of his love, this assurance of his care and protection, till he come. Yet,

Fourthly.—Are you come with *reverence*? Amidst all the triumphs of your faith, are you mindful who you are and with whom you are to transact? That you yourself are a vile sinner, coming to sit down at your Master's table, who is also the most high God? The thought indeed ought not to terrify you, but it ought to awe you. Have you therefore been so mindful of your sins, and so abased in your own eyes, that you could not think of drawing near but in the merit of your Lord, and upon his express invitation and command? And, when even thus you are emboldened to approach, are you impressed with a deep sense of your vileness, of your unworthiness of so high an honour, and covered with shame while you are admitted to so near an approach? Believe it, my friends, the highest archangels rejoice to minister under him with whom you are about to feast. You must needs then be humble when you come near

to his Majesty; you must needs admire and adore, and be full of lowly reverence of his presence, while he thus condescends to us sinful dust and ashes.

The thoughts I have now suggested to you may well add to your godly fear and reverence; while you cannot but have reflected how far short you have come in all these things, or at least in fulfilling your sacramental engagements on former occasions. Who can say, with all this sincerity, and diligence, and faith, and reverence, I have always attended on the Lord at his table? Let the thought of former miscarriages still more humble and abase you; let it also increase your fear and watchfulness. And O that others, who have neglected or profaned this high and holy ordinance, may be seasonably brought to a sense of their guilt with regard to this important branch of Christian worship!

S E R M O N X X X .

GALATIANS iii. 24.

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

WHILE we are proving ourselves by the law, the holy, just, and good law of God, bringing our hearts and ways under examination by one and another of the divine commandments, do not our sins observably increase upon us, our guilt grow up to a mountainous size, and are we not constrained to cry out with David, *My iniquities are more in number than the hairs of my head?* But, brethren, do we and can we also sincerely say with him on the review, *My heart hath failed me; O Lord! let it be thy pleasure to deliver me: make haste, O Lord! to help me?* Are we loathing ourselves for our abominations? doth shame cover our face? and, our hearts failing us, are we crying mightily to our God, that for his mercy's sake in Jesus Christ he will have mercy upon us? Have we thus improved the word we have already heard, and profited by the inquiries which we have hitherto been making after our sins? If not, what are we doing other than adding sin unto sin? Why do we suffer

the devil to catch away the word from our hearts as soon as we have heard it? In truth this is too generally the case among you. You come and sit here as God's people; you hear what is said to you; you plainly perceive that the matter we treat of is of the last importance to your souls: but, when this is done, where are the fruits? O that such fruits were found among us as God doth most certainly and most reasonably expect! You ought to have been long ago an humble, believing, heavenly people, full of love to God and to one another. But is this the case? Hath not God cause to say of us, my brethren, *All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people**? They will not hear, they will not regard: I have shewn them their filthiness in the glass of my law, but they go away and forget what manner of men they are; they go away and forget all that I have said to them; they do not meditate thereupon; they do not commune with their own hearts in their chambers, digesting the bread I have given them to eat; they forget all that I have spoken, one losing it in care, and another in pleasure, and another in indulgence, and another in sloth, every one in pursuit of the particular lust of his heart. *Yet my word shall not return unto me void* †. I beseech you, brethren, is not the word God's? You know it is. And is not the ministry of it God's own appointment? You know we are no less than ambassadors for God, and his messengers to you. And is not the day God's;

* Rom. x. 21.

† Isaiah:lv. 11.

and the house God's; and the people, do you not by your coming hither profess yourselves to belong to God? I beseech you, after all, how will you answer it to God, that you remain still so idle, that you hear and do not, that you hear and use no endeavour to do, forgetting as soon as you have heard? O that you would duly consider the awful declaration, *That the word of the Lord shall not return unto him void*: that the word you hear in this house is a blessing or a curse to your souls, is life or death to you as yourselves improve or disregard it!—But, to draw nearer the point—

Our conduct is under examination respecting the second commandment. And this commandment was said to enjoin upon us the worship of God in a due use of prayer, the word, and the sacraments. As the occasion then required it, I spake of the sacraments the last Lord's day. And now I am to consider *prayer* and the *word*, with a view of bringing your conduct under inquiry, and so of suggesting cause of humiliation, and of application to the blood of Jesus for mercy.

You will remember that four things were said to be requisite in order to a religious discharge of every part of divine worship, that it might be so done as to glorify God and profit us. These were sincerity, diligence, faith, and reverence. We will apply these to the *word* and *prayer*. And,

First.—Have we been *sincere* in the use of God's word? There is a generation *who desire not the*

*knowledge of God's ways**, and therefore care not *to come to the light, lest their deeds should be reprov'd †*; or if they do come to inquire at the mouth of the Lord, it is hypocritically, not with an honest heart and single eye; simply desiring to know what the will of the Lord is, though it should be never so much against their own inclinations; but, like wicked Ahab, wanting the word of the Lord to speak good concerning their case, and not evil; that is, wanting to have the word of God on their side, and that merely for this wretched end, that they may be more satisfied and easy in their pernicious ways. Now, we know that, as Satan can transform himself into an angel of light, so an hypocritical, insincere, and deceived heart, can make the Scriptures speak the language of hell; because it is wished they might correspond with the prejudice or inclination of the heart, it is easy to believe they do. Wherefore, in the hearing or reading of God's word, have you never had your prejudices? did you never want the Scripture to be of your humour or opinion, coming thereto with preconceived notions, and so more apt to warp and distort its meaning than fairly to be judged by it? There is more of this insincerity in the world than is thought of: and this is the reason why men of all persuasions do think the Scriptures speak on their side. They come with prejudice, and so, longing to find somewhat which may favour their way, they easily do so, catching at

* Job xxi. 14.

† John iii. 20.

every word which may seem to suit their purpose. The remedy for this is not a Popish infallible interpreter, but a simplicity and true honesty of heart. But say if you have not brought your prejudices with you against God's word? Have you never, in or after hearing, had your disgusts against it? Have you always hearkened to it with a child-like teachableness and meekness? or rather, instead of humbly and thankfully applying all to yourself, have you not been unwilling to hear its declarations; and its judgments, because they were so severe; its precepts, because they are so spiritual; its prohibitions, because they are so self-denying; its means, because so opposite to flesh and blood? Whence is it otherwise that so many of you have been wanting me to prophesy to you smooth things, and complaining of me that I am often hard, and terrifying, and carrying things too far, when nevertheless you all know in your consciences I speak to you but what God speaketh in his word? In short, *As new-born babes, have ye desired the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby* *? As a child doth the breast, have you always loved and always desired the word, always received it when offered you, always fed upon it, and made it the whole nourishment of your soul? Your diligence in the use of it may best show you your sincerity, and therefore I ask,

Secondly.—Have you been *diligent* in the use of God's word? Have you been diligent to hear it publicly ministered? Hath your place been never vacant

* 1 Pet. ii. 2.

in the church? or, when vacant, was it always an absolute necessity, so as that you can appeal to God you did not come for this only reason, because you could not, or at least because you were satisfied in your conscience it was his will in your circumstances you should not? Have you been diligent to read it in private? Hath your Bible at no time lain by covered with dust? or is it not the case with you, perhaps, that you have never yet provided to have such a book in your house? Was this because of your poverty? What! all your life so poor? Have you never squandered more than this would amount to? or, even in the most necessitous case, would you not beg if you were never able to buy? Or, say you could not read; have you been diligent to meditate on what you heard therefrom? You could think: have you thought on God's word? this is required of all, whether readers or not readers. Have you endeavoured always to hide it in your heart? All the day long hath your study been in it? Have you made it your delight and your counsellor?—God's command concerning the Scriptures, *You shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way; when thou liest down, and when thou risest up**. It means plainly that the Scriptures must be the matter of our ordinary conversation. Before the business of the day begins, and when it is ended, when we sit at our tables, and when we walk abroad, our conversation

* Deut. xi. 19.

must be from the word of God. This might you all do, whether learned or unlearned; but this have you done, or do you? Are your children, your family, your houses, your tables, your walks, witnesses for you herein? Alas! it is greatly to be feared the word of God is more in the mouths of some to jest upon it, than of others to speak of it with honour. Indeed we are ashamed of so unfashionable a thing; and, while it is banished our familiar discourses, our souls suffer abundantly from the idle, vain, trifling, insignificant matters we entertain one another with in our friendly intercourses.—But have you been diligent so to use the word as to profit by it? Have you made diligent preparation for such use of it, by praying for a meek and understanding heart, that you might be able both to know and receive the will of God concerning you? Have you been diligent to apply it to yourself rather than others when you have been hearing or reading it, always laying home to your own soul the doctrines, reproofs, corrections, and instructions it hath spoken to you? And have you also been diligent to do what you have been taught, carefully keeping the word in your heart, and recalling it for use by recollection and prayer? To talk over the Sermon one with another, and to communicate their several experiences relating to it, was a good old custom among Christians. Have you desired or endeavoured to do this? or, rather, have you not too often carelessly forgotten, as soon as you were gone from church, whatever was said to you? And how could it be otherwise, when you would pass your Sunday

evenings in visits one with another; and when in them you would *speak your own words on the sabbath-day**? To speak freely, I never expect to see that person religious indeed who continues in this practice, and thereby breaks at least two commandments at once as soon as departed from the house of God, the fourth by an abuse of the sabbath, the second by a careless and wilful forgetfulness of the word spoken.—I say then, once more, have we used the word with diligence, or have we not all been sadly negligent to read, to hear, to speak of, to improve it? And to what shall we ascribe this, but to want of sincere love of it? Let us take shame to ourselves before God, that while we have been so desirous to hear, or read, or talk of any matter of pleasure, we should have been so backward to God's word; and been amusing ourselves with that which doth not profit, while we have been neglecting what alone can make us wise unto salvation!

Thirdly.—Have we used the Scriptures in *faith*? There is ground enough for believing the Scriptures to be the word of God; but yet to believe them such with the heart is no slight matter: indeed there is no doing it of ourselves, for this faith is the gift of God. To use the Scriptures in faith is not only to receive every and any part of them with suitable temper and disposition of spirit, but especially it is to have all the great points of them lying on the heart; to entertain in the heart the threatenings and curses of God

* Isaiah lviii. 13.

against sin, with an humble acknowledgment and awful adoration of their reality and justice; to entertain the promises with persuasion of their truth, satisfiedness in their fulness, and content that they shall surely be accomplished; to entertain the precepts with delight, as being holy, just, and good; to entertain the prohibitions with willingness and readiness; and to entertain the means prescribed with desire and thankfulness. And have we thus received the word? Sinners, see you not that God's curse against you for your sins hath never humbled your hearts; that you do not take one of his promises relating to this or another life into your hearts, so as to rest upon and be influenced by it; that heartily and from the bottom of your souls you hate all which God bids you do, and with full choice love and follow what he forbids you; that you experience no desire after the means God affords us, and use them with a most wicked indifference? And where then is your faith in God's word? Believers, have God's threatenings awed you as they ought now and always, and his promises encouraged you; hath what he bid been received with cheerful delight, and what he forbad been forsaken with utter detestation; or have you always used the means with desire and thankfulness? Have you used the word in faith? Though you believe, have you no cause to say, *Lord, help mine unbelief?* Put yourselves to the trial; hath faith enlivened the word in your hearts whenever you heard it? Whence, then, hath the hearing of God's terrors drove you no faster from the wrath to

come, or the declarations which you have had made to you so often of God's mercies allured you no more to Jesus? Whence is the law of God so little transcribed into your hearts, and the law of sin so little mortified there? May not Christ well complain of us, *O, faithless generation! how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you**? One and all of us, we have great cause of humiliation for our little faith in God's word. And be it remembered, that nothing more dishonours God than this, seeing not to believe his word is to make him a liar, to suppose him unfaithful, to suspect him weak, or changeable, or mistaken. Alas! who can know the depth of that mystery of iniquity, *the heart of man*, when so much sin is implied in only one word? But,

Fourthly.—Have we used God's word with *reverence*? Brethren, in all reason we should approach God's word as if we heard God speaking to us. For the word is God's revealed will, the declaration of God's mind to us and concerning us. The difference is not so much whether the instrument he uses be the voice of a man, or the voice of an angel; the thing to be regarded is, that what we hear or read is the declaration of God's mind to us. And I will leave you to judge in what manner we ought to attend upon God revealing his mind to us. Only consider that he is the glorious eternal almighty Majesty of heaven and earth, and we dust, ashes, sinners, and you will easily perceive, that, with our faces on the earth, with

* Matt. xvii. 17.

the deepest prostration of spirit, struck into awe and reverence we ought to attend the manifestations of his mind. But, now, are you not already confounded in the recollection of that little reverence wherewith you have so often attended on the most high God speaking to you? How wandering, cold, and inattentive you have been! how lightly you have regarded! how heedlessly you have approached! how suddenly you have forgotten! the ministry is God's especial way of speaking;—a thought which should make the preacher and the audience both to tremble, lest either should profane the word of God. And is it fit that God, opening himself by the mouth of his messengers, should be heard with curiosity, with critical remarks only on the abilities of the preacher, with contention against his declarations, with an insulting indifference, with a horrid slight, disdain, and a licentious air of disregard? Is it fit that messages from heaven should be received with that irreverence they too often are? Attention is not enough, there must be reverence; reverence not of the man, but of the word; of the word, as coming from the most high God. I beg you to consider if you have thus heard; to see whether your irreverence hath not been a signal cause of your little profiting by what you hear, and to weigh what that word of the inspired preacher meaneth, *Keep thy foot when thou goest into the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they know not that they do evil**. —And thus much concerning the use of the word.

* Eccles. v. 1.

II.—I would speak a few words concerning the use we have made of *prayer*; and they will be but a few, because what hath been said concerning the word may be so easily applied to this matter of prayer. Yet I ask,

First.—Have you been *sincere* in your approaches to the throne of grace? Sincerity in prayer is an unfeigned desire of God's granting what we ask. But I fear there is much seeming prayer where there is little unfeigned desire. Did you never ask for a contrite heart, and full of godly sorrow for your sins; or for a new heart and new spirit; or for faith and love, and other graces; or for God's blessing on the church; or for the conversion of sinners; or for the establishment of saints; or, in short, for many other things which have been the matter of your prayers (if not elsewhere, yet in this house at least), when at the bottom you really desired none of these things; or when your desire of them was so very weak that you could hardly call it sincere?

Secondly.—Have we been *diligent* in prayer? Diligence implies that we are constant at our work, and busy while we are in it. How have you been constant in prayer? This you ought. *Continue instant in prayer, and pray without ceasing**, are Scripture injunctions. But some pray not at all. Perhaps they are more than may be thought of. Truly I stick not to put in the number all such as pray not in secret, though they appear in the congregation. That they

* Rom. xii. 12. 1 Thess. v. 17.

may do and never pray, unless an unmeaning repetition of words should be called prayer. And if they had any thing more, any the least grain of the spirit of prayer and supplications, it would bring them on their knees in private as well as public. And others, are they as constant as they should? (let the question be put to any of you all.) Have you been always constant? At no time have you needlessly neglected, or causelessly been diverted from it? And when you have been thus employed, have you been always busy, your heart in your work, and all your strength employed upon it? Whoever prays indeed shall often find it no easy work. There shall need much wrestling, wrestling with the flesh, wrestling with the world, wrestling with Satan. And what! have you always wrestled, and always vanquished? Whoever you are, I am sure you are crying out, “ Lord, forgive me the iniquity of my holy things !”

Thirdly.—Have you also prayed in *faith*? Now, it is the very nature of such prayer to cast all manner of care and every burden on the Lord; guilt, corruption, trial, temptation, whatever it be, to come and lay it all upon Christ; and this with a certain confidence in him, which both doth him the highest honour, and makes him best pleased with us. It charges Christ with all, and leaves every thing with him. It says, “ Lord, here are all these sins that I have done; “ here are all these temptations I have to struggle “ with; here are all these corruptions to subdue; “ here is all this work to be performed; and I am a “ poor helpless thing: behold, I lay it all upon thee,

“ and leave it all and every part of it with thee.
 “ And I know that thou canst, thou hast told me
 “ thou wilt, take care of the whole. It is thy office
 “ to do so, and thou delightest to do it: Lord, I
 “ cast all my care on thee.” There is no other boldness in this than what the promises of God encourage and give sanction to. Such is the very prayer of faith; and I must leave yourselves to judge how far you have approached the throne in this spirit.

Fourthly.—Have you prayed with *reverence*? What! always, and with all due reverence, as speaking to God? You know how great a reverence, how profound a humility, becomes you, a creature and a sinner, when you approach the great God. But hath this attended you in all your approaches? Whence then is it that some are sitting on their seats? that others are unconcernedly gazing about while prayers are here offering up? Is this reverence? I do not say that wandering thoughts, lamented and contended with, shall render prayers to the most merciful God, offered up in Christ’s name, of no account: but you must needs see that such thoughts argue a want of due reverence. And which of you hath had such an abiding and awful reverence of the majesty and presence of that God with whom he hath been transacting in prayer, as to be altogether free of them? And may not this have been owing to an hasty and unprepared rushing into God’s presence? And then what should that convince of, but that we were not solemnly enough impressed with that awful intercourse we were about to hold with God?

Let these hints serve relating to prayer; and let the whole convince you how exceedingly you have transgressed this second commandment, which regards the instituted methods of worshipping God in the word, prayer, and the sacraments.

Add the inquiries which have been made from the second commandment to those which were made from the first, and then say if you have not abundant need of a righteousness better than your own, and how justly the Apostle says in the text, that *The law is a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.* I shall be greatly rejoiced if these considerations drive any of you to him, or nearer to him. And much need there is they should drive us all to him, when we remember that otherwise the curse of the law abideth on us.

But remember, my brethren, if you will go savingly to Christ, it must be in a way of true humiliation; loathing yourselves, ashamed, sorry, and greatly humbled for all your transgressions against God's majesty. Remember that Christ did not come to be a minister of sin. God forbid. But he came to give us encouragement and to give us power to repent. And how much greater will our damnation be, if to our transgressions of God's law we add so horrid an abuse of the Gospel, as from Christ's coming to save us to take liberty of continuing in sin?

I dismiss the subject for the present, determining to resume it again, if God permit, at the return of this season. But truly that is a great way off; and who can say that either you or I shall live to see it?

Certainly many of us shall not. If it shall please God to take me in the mean time, what you have already heard will be his witness against you, and you must see to it that you be ready to give a faithful account of the improvement you have made of it at the day of judgment, where we shall assuredly all meet again; and where it will be my joy and my crown, as it is my most earnest prayer, to see you every one at the right hand of the Judge, and hear that soul-ravishing sentence of acquittal and glory pronounced over you all, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* Even so, Lord Jesus, for thy name's sake! *Amen, amen.*

S E R M O N XXXI.

GALATIANS iii. 24.

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

THE design of Lent is for the more express humiliation and mourning for sin. We must come to Christ as men cast away, and glad by any means to be saved from perishing. How doth the sinfulness and misery of our lost estate appear? The text tells us, by the law. The law is our schoolmaster, by holding up to us its righteousness and curse, condemns and makes us afraid, and so drives us to Christ. It is the contemplation of the law therefore must abase us; and this abasement causing us to draw near to Jesus for pardon, we learn from the love of God, manifested to us in the satisfaction and atonement made for sin, to loathe ourselves for it, and lament and forsake it. To open therefore the law as a rule of duty, and that in a way of inquiry, that therein as in a glass we might see our own deformity, was thought a proper employment at this season the last year. Then it was proposed to go over the Ten Commandments in this view; to go as far therein only as

the Sundays of Lent gave opportunity; and, should God give me life and continuance among you, to resume what remained the next (that is now, the present) Lent.—While I am speaking this, the thought of God's having spared me, and the most of those who then heard me, this year, also forces itself upon me, and suggests to me to ask myself and you, what fruit we can show for so long a time, and for so many opportunities as we have enjoyed in it? Are we grown stronger in faith, hope, desire after God and glory? What sins have been renounced, and lusts mortified? Have we been more active and zealous in our Master's service; and what have we attempted for his honour and interests, and for the salvation of others? Let us look back, and take shame to ourselves we have so little profited. Yea, but are we not rather further from God than a year ago? Have we not lost ground? Do we not see less of our sins, and feel less for our soul, and seek less after Christ? Are not our eyes closing? Or perhaps we have thought nothing about this needful thing, and just even as we were, insensible and careless! Is it not so with some of you? Are twelve other months gone over your heads just like the former? In these, as in them, have you been adding sin to sin? As if your guilt were not great and heavy enough before, have you been filling up the measure of it every day of all this time? If this be the case with any of you, I know not what to say to it. I wish I could say any thing that might do you service. I will say this. Will you come to a resolution that

you will not meddle with religion; that you will go on, live and die in your old way, and stand by the consequence? I would have you try to bring yourself to this resolution. Deliberately and positively determine, once for all, that you will never have any thing to do with Christ. Come, resolve upon it, that you will not forsake your old way, as long as you live. Why, it is but to lose heaven, and perish for ever! Resolve, I say, distinctly and fully, that you will never meddle with religion. It is as good resolve as do it. Well, then, are you determined? No. Satan has never yet pushed you to this point, nor ever will. He knows he shall succeed more effectually by putting you on delay. Satan will not; then I will still more and more press you to try if you cannot come to this resolution. Doubtless if you can but once be coolly and deliberately resolved that you will have nothing to do with God, and godliness, and glory, and will never mind any thing but the world, it will presently make your life more easy, you will eat, drink, and be merry; *you will eat and drink, for to-morrow you die* *. What profits it to halt between two opinions? You do not like Christ. Why not then resolve you will never have any thing to do with him? You see my meaning. You are in fact and continuedly doing that you dare not resolve to do; the past year proves it, and the present hath not produced, nor is likely to produce, any thing to the contrary.

* Isaiah xxii. 13.

What use shall we make now of past experience? Shall we not humble our souls? and shall not what lies so immediately behind and before us quicken us to do so? Let us proceed then in the work proposed. The two first commandments have been already opened and applied in the method designed. Proceed we now to the

Third commandment, Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.—The name of the Lord, though it signify properly and strictly any of his titles, such as Jehovah, Lord, God, yet, inasmuch as names only serve to distinguish persons, we must understand hereby God himself, his majesty, being, and perfections. Thou shalt not take his name, that is, thou shalt not touch or meddle with God, or any thing whereby he is known as persons are by their names. Thou shalt not touch and meddle therewith in vain, in a vain manner, for no cause, and upon light occasion. The sense of the commandment is this: “ We must not in our ordinary conduct and conversation behave ourselves dishonourably to that God whom we solemnly take to be our God, according to the first commandment, and whom we profess to be our God by the public worship we pay him, according to the second commandment; but our whole conduct and conversation in the world must be such as doth reverently set forth and tend to promote his glory.” In short, in word and deed we must behave in such manner as shall be to the glory of God’s name: when

we do not say and do every thing which may promote God's honour, as well as when we say or do any thing contrary to his honour, we are guilty of taking his name in vain. Let us come therefore to inquiry under these two heads, whether in word or conduct we have taken God's name in vain. And,

I.—In word. Has our conversation been always such, as that therein there was never any thing dishonourable to his glory, and always every thing suited to do him honour?

First.—Has there been nothing dishonourable to God upon our lips? The Apostle St. James saith, *The tongue is a world of iniquity, an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.* Let us look into the use we have made of this member.—Have we profaned God's name, taking it in our mouths lightly, irreverently, and without design of doing him honour? This is the manner of too many to abuse that sacred name in horrid imprecations, and curses, and appeals to God, in every and no cause; as it is also the manner of many more to use familiarly God's name in almost every sentence they speak; and in the mean time both are ready with excuse, the *one* is provoked or does it inconsiderately, the *other* insists there is no great harm in it; how truly, let this third commandment determine.—Have you never treated irreligiously God's word, and the truths it contains? And this, whether by disputing against what it saith, or by indecently using the expressions of it? It is the way of some to dispute against what, for manifest reasons, they care not to believe: and of others, with as great

ill manners as ungodliness, to clothe their idle jests over a glass in Scripture language.—Have you never spoken lightly of God's ordinances, his day, sacraments, and other parts of his worship, and especially the preaching of the word, wherein we are most apt to offend, because it comes to us through the hands of men? But it must be remembered that as the word is God's, so is the ministration of it God's ordinance. And therefore Christ saith, *He that despiseth you despiseth me* *. To speak against what a minister saith from God's word is not to speak against the man, but directly against God †; and to speak against the free enforcements, exhortations, and applications he makes of God's word, is directly to speak against the faithful execution of God's ordinance.—Have you never spoken rashly of God's *people*; too hastily judging and censuring them; too readily receiving and propagating evil reports concerning them; running them down for their infirmities, and giving a malicious turn to their graces; and so miscalling the profession of Christ and his word by the odious name of hypocrisy, as to discourage and discountenance it?—Have you never spoken disrespectfully of God's *providence* and *grace*; in the day of your distress cursing the day you were born ‡, and complaining with Cain that *your punishment was more than you could bear* §, contending that none was ever visited as you; and in the day of your prosperity ascribing

* Luke x. 16.

‡ Job iii. 1—3.

† See 1 Thess. iv. 8.

§ Gen. iv. 13.

all to yourself, saying, in the forbidden language, *My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth, or for my righteousness* * hath the Lord done such and such things for me?—Have you never spoken dishonourably of God's promises? Faith brings glory to God, when our expressions are full of confidence in his care and protection, according to his word. Perhaps there is hardly a greater instance of this than in that of Job, *Though he slay me, yet will I put my trust in him* †? Whereas, when we are crying out, *Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore* ‡? we bring disrepute on his faithfulness and truth in the face of those that hear us. From such circumstances as these we may see if we have not spoken unadvisedly and dishonourably to God with our lips.—But further,

Secondly.—Has our conversation been always not only not dishonourable, but such as in every thing was suited to glorify God? Have we always in circumstances required spoken for God? *I will speak of thy testimonies*, says the Psalmist, *before kings, and will not be ashamed* §. Hath this been always our case? What! have we never been ashamed, and spoke (to say the most) but by halves, disgracing the truth by not freely and fully declaring it? Have we never spoke more in conformity with the times and the company than we ought?—Yea, but is there not also such a thing as sinful silence? a holding the

* Deut. viii. 17.—ix. 4.

† Job xiii. 15.

‡ Psalm lxxvii. 8.

§ cxix. 46.

peace altogether even from good? and are we not chargeable with it? I read of Christ, that, when himself was reviled, persecuted, accused, he answered not so much as a word; but when God's truth was in question, or the cause of God dishonoured, then it was, *Wo unto you Scribes, wo unto you Pharisees, wo unto you lawyers* *! Just the reverse of what we do, who are warm and contentious for ourselves, and silent for God.—Alas! what day, what hour, what company, doth not convict us of opportunities passed by wherein we might have said something, or something more than we did, for God? And to speak now of the general use of the tongue: what has been your general conversation? Has it not often been trifling, insignificant, unprofitable? Who have been your familiar acquaintance? and what has your conversation together usually turned upon? Has it been any thing to the glory of God, directly or indirectly? If not, are you guilty or not guilty of opposing the design of this commandment? Our Lord saith, *We shall give account of every idle word at the day of judgment* †, that is, of every unprofitable word, which is inconsistent with the character and conduct of a Christian: and then what cause have we every one to cry out, *God, be merciful to me a sinner*?—Also, when we have been speaking of God, have we always done it with all that reverence which became us towards him, so as to exalt him, and express a lively sense upon our hearts of

* Matt. xxiii. 13.

† xii. 36.

his being that glorious God we say he is? When we have spoken of his justice, have our tongues expressed a becoming dread; when of his holiness, a becoming shame; when of his grace and love, a becoming gratitude; when of his faithfulness, a becoming confidence; when of his greatness, a becoming humility? Have we as we ought exalted God in his works, his word, his providence, his judgments, his mercies, while we have been speaking of them, whether they regarded the world in general, or ourselves in particular? Under whatever dispensations we at any time have been, have we made it our endeavour so to speak as to give glory to his justice, or mercy, or patience, as the case was? In a word, have we in all our conversations exalted God as we ought, considered as a great and gracious Maker, Redeemer, and Sanctifier?

These hints may serve to show you what guilt you may have contracted by taking God's name in vain by word. So I go on to inquire,

II.—Whether in conduct you have not been guilty of taking God's name in vain. And here also we must search again into the negative and positive side of the question.

First.—Negatively: Has there been nothing in your conduct disgraceful and dishonourable to that Jehovah whose servant you profess yourself to be? You may remember what was Nathan's parting word to David, *Because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child*

also that is born unto thee shall surely die *. David's conduct in the matter of Bathsheba had given the enemies of the Lord great handle to speak evil of and run down the good ways of the Lord. The question is, whether we have not done so likewise? Indeed we all have been guilty, as will appear by a review of our conduct, both in our general callings as Christians, and in our special callings in that state of life in which the providence of God hath placed us.

Consider your *general calling* as Christians; have you done nothing dishonourable to the name of Jesus therein? Looking back on your past years, can you say, *I am pure from the blood of all men* †; my conduct at no time hath strengthened the hands of wickedness, and given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme? Recollect the various periods and passages of your life, your younger and your riper years, the places you have lived in, and the persons who have been privy to your conduct, and try if, with St. Paul, you can appeal to all these things, and say, *Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblamably, I behaved myself among you* ‡? Have you in no instances, at no time, set before the world an example dishonourable to your Lord? What! did you never show forth any pride, conceit, and vanity; any anger, envy, resentment, malice, or evil speaking; any conformity with the ways and maxims of the wicked, doing as others,

* 2 Sam. xii. 14.

† Acts xx. 26.

‡ 1 Thess. xi. 10.

following the multitude, and refusing to be particular? Have neither the honour, esteem, nor interest of the world, ever had undue influence on your conduct? Did the world never see you step into indulgence in meat, drink, or apparel? never yielding to sloth, idleness, and pleasure? at no time trespass the bounds of decency and modesty in word or deed? never giving countenance to the abuse of the sabbath and God's worship? What! have you never given encouragement to evil, in all the places where you have been, and among all the persons with whom you have conversed? Search rather and see in how many particulars, perhaps for how many years, your conduct has been inconsistent with, and dishonourable to, that holy name whereby you are called. Nor shall we need look far back; the traces behind us reach home to the present day in one instance or another. And yet in every instance we must be forced to confess we acted unsuitably with our profession, and took the name of the Lord our God in vain. To say the truth, careless persons are always doing so; their whole lives are a continual taking God's name in vain, and giving occasion with a witness to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. This is an awakening thought. But, alas! such miscalled Christians regard not how much dishonour they bring on the Lord Jesus, nor how many unhappy souls they are the instruments of encouraging and forwarding into hell. Yet how deplorable is it, that while the true believer is pierced to the very heart when he takes but one step dishonourable to God,

that they should every step be trampling down his glory, and feel no concern for the matter? But, to pass on,

Besides our *general* we have all of us a *special calling*; and it is peculiarly needful we should all inquire if we have not by our conduct therein dishonoured God's holy name. In the commonwealth, the minister of state, the commander by sea or land, the judge, and every other officer, is expected to do nothing hurtful to the honour of the king and the interests of the people; when at any time they do, all, and very reasonably too, are calling for justice. Now we each of us bear a particular office under Christ, and that according to his assignment, whatever our station of life be; while also our misconduct therein doth peculiarly dishonour God, and hurt the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom. I say we have all our particular callings: let us all examine how we have acted in them. You know what your calling is, for a calling each of you have, though Providence may have distinguished some of you by a fortune, which exempts you from those determinate employments, or that more restrained course of life, which others are confined to. You know, I say, your calling; how then have you acted in it? Have you been seeking to glorify God in it? If not, you have totally abused it, and taken his name in vain. If worldly honour, worldly interest, or carnal gratification, hath been the thing you have been aiming at, you have dishonoured your Lord, and taken God's name in vain. Look back now and see, hath God no charge against you

concerning your special calling? Did you never betray your trust through idleness, sloth, vanity, company-keeping, desire of man's favour? Did you never pervert it to the ends of pride and vain glory? Has the world never seen any thing in your conduct respecting your calling which has been dishonourable to the Christian name? What! never any compliances for filthy lucre's sake? never any trimming, or truckling, or dissembling, or flattering? I cannot stop to be more particular. Yourself must see if there have not been many things dishonourable to God's name in your distinct and particular calling; and especially this, whether the world may not have most discernibly seen you were not carrying it on with a single design to glorify God. Now,

Secondly.—For the positive side: Have we so conducted ourselves always in our general and special calling as might most tend to glorify God's name? The Scripture is express, *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven**. Now, the inquiry is, have we acted as children of our Father which is in heaven, zealous always for his glory?

In our general calling, have we been always shining lights? Was the will of God our rule always, and our only rule? Ever concerned to glorify God, have we always conformed to this rule, and so shown forth our good works before men to God's honour? Have we been always such examples of faith and heavenly-

* Matt. v. 16:

mindfulness, hope and charity, meekness and humility, patience and contentedness, diligence and zeal; have we always in such manner approved ourselves dead to sin, dead to the world, dead to the esteem, the pleasures, the interests of it, dead to self-will and self-pleasing, without anger, pride, envy, and revenge; and so chaste, modest, temperate, sober, as that in the whole of our conduct God has been glorified in us; and wherever we have been, and whatever we have done, we have shone as lights unto the world? Who will say this? None but they who know not what manner of men they are. The humble Christian will smite upon his breast, and say, "Father, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that in all these things I have not glorified thee as I ought. How exceedingly have I failed in that faith, hope, and charity, which make thy children a light unto the world, and are the good works which men may see and glorify thee for?" Indeed the self-sufficient will pretend a claim, and be rash to cry out almost as Christ did, "Father, I have glorified thee upon earth," when, alas! they have been seeking nothing but self-praise and honour from others; while the most have never thought of glorifying God by their conduct, nor can produce so much as one act in their lives undertaken in that view, which should have influenced the whole of them.

Also, in our special callings, have we done all we might for God's glory? have we been faithful, diligent, laborious, cheerful, undaunted, unwearied, upright, day after day, in our Father's work? have we

always said in our hearts, thus and thus shall God be glorified? and hath this stirred us up to labour and not to faint? Not to speak of Christ's example, which leaves all so far behind, only compare your conduct in your calling with that of St. Paul in his: and certainly you can assign no reason why you should not have been zealous, active, laborious, ceaseless, as he. Make then the comparison, consider the Apostle's conduct and your own, and see if you have been in your conduct the thousandth part of what he was, and what the glory of God required you should be. Brethren, God hath put a talent into every one of our hands, and bid us go and work; whether ministers, magistrates, or tradesmen, whether men in authority or inferiors, whether parents or children, masters or servants, we have all a special calling. Let us look then what we can severally answer. Will all that have been witnesses of our conduct bear testimony we have not borne our calling in vain? To instance only in one instead of all, masters of families, will your children and servants bear testimony for you that you have ruled in your house for the glory of God, encouraging godliness, discountenancing vice, worshipping God, and carefully instructing and watching over those committed to your care? Can you call them all together, even each of all that have been under your roof, and will they be your joint and unanimous witnesses, that throughout your whole families you have done all you could to glorify God?

By this time the design of this commandment may

be manifest, and that it reaches further than cursing and swearing, and a light use of God's name. It commands us not only to own the Lord to be our God, and to own him by the worship we pay him, but to do it in the whole of our conduct in word and deed. And you will easily see how all other owning of God is nothing, if this owning him in word and deed be wanting. Consider what you have heard with application. And may the Lord forgive us our sins, and put a new heart into us, for Jesus Christ's sake!

S E R M O N X X X I I .

GALATIANS iii. 24.

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

IN laying open the law with a view to examination and application, I have already set before you the inward principle required in the first commandment, godliness itself lying in the heart, and also the outward expressions of it enjoined by the second and third commandments, both in worship and in the whole of our conduct.

The fourth commandment requires the sanctification of the seventh day to God's glory and our spiritual profit. God's people must keep a weekly holy-day, in remembrance of the works of creation and redemption, and in a way of preparation for that rest which remaineth for them in the life to come. So you see the sabbath is a day not only of rest from worldly labour, but of holiness; and therefore a day of ceasing from worldly labour, that it may be spent in such exercises as tend to sanctification, without which a day of rest would be no other than a day of idleness, and so of sin.

The design of the sabbath is twofold. Principally, that the servants of the Lord, by ceasing from ordinary employments, and devoting themselves to God's worship on that day, might make a public profession of his name. And, subordinately hereto, that by the exercises of public and private worship the sanctification of their souls might be promoted, and they forwarded in the way to their better and everlasting rest. In the former of which views, the sabbath appears calculated for the glory of God in the world; as in the latter it is manifestly an institution given us in great mercy, that we might not be lost in the ceaseless cares of this life, and so forget and remain disqualified for the glory that shall be revealed. Now, such being the design of the sabbath, here are three things evidently required in it, in either of which, whenever we have failed, we have contracted the guilt of sabbath-breaking.

I.—Here is resting from ordinary employments.

II.—Here is a sanctifying that rest.

III.—Here is a right aim in such rest and sanctification, namely, the glory of God and the benefiting our souls.

First.—Here is resting from ordinary employments. *In it thou shalt do no manner of work.* On the sabbath-day nothing of the work of the six days may be done. Consider now what the work of the six days is, and you will find in what latitude this resting from ordinary employments is to be understood. In the exercise of our calling, there must be a *thinking* and *contriving* of our business; there must be a *talking*

of it, by conferring with others, asking questions of those with whom we are concerned, and giving out directions and orders; and there must be the *employment of the body* in it. When a man does his work, his thoughts, and tongue, and hands, are engaged in it. Consequently, on this day of rest, there must be not only a ceasing from the actual labour of the hands, but neither the tongue nor thoughts may be engaged upon our worldly matters and affairs. So saith Isaiah, *If thou wilt honour God on the sabbath, it must be in not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words**. Our own words must be forborne, and our own pleasure, and so of course our own thoughts: for, it is plain, words and thoughts of worldly business are as opposite to the sanctifying of the sabbath as ordinary work is; seeing the soul can no better or more be employed in holy exercises, while we are thinking and talking of our worldly things, than if the whole body were engaged in them. Nay, rather, such thinking and talking about worldly concerns is more contrary to the sanctification of the sabbath than labour itself; because thinking and talking of worldly matters doth more peculiarly exclude serious meditations than the labour of the hands singly could do.

Now therefore bring your conduct under examination. Have you rested from contriving, talking about, and doing worldly business on the Lord's day?

Examine what your Sunday, thoughts have been.

* Isaiah lviii. 13.

Have you always in thought and mind been in heaven that day, having left your worldly cares, and interests, and affairs, out of sight behind you? What! have you never been devising how you might contrive some business, or prevent some misfortune, or bring about some project? Has your head never been plodding and working for the world, perhaps in this house? never meditating how you should meet with this person, and transact with that? Nay, have you never been consulting with yourself, even beforehand, about some business to be negociated on Sunday, and, when Sunday was come, revolving it in your mind, and feeling yourself displeas'd if your scheme did not succeed? Worldly thoughts will indeed of themselves be intruding unseasonably upon the mind, and demand from all the most resolute resistance; causing the truly humble soul to lament his sad sinfulness and weakness: but, instead of resisting, did you never indulge them, allowing them for long spaces together to dwell peaceably with you on the hallow'd hours of the sabbath? Say, have you nothing to answer before God for *worldly thoughts* on the Lord's day?

And then, again, have you not spoken *your own words* on this day? Look back and see if there be no records against you in the book of God of worldly affairs negociated on the sabbath-day. It is a general, however sinful and hurtful practice, to hold worldly conferences, to be settling worldly bargains, and to be giving worldly directions on the Lord's day. Did you never hear of going to this or that church to

meet such an one on business? It is a common saying all over the country, *I shall see him at church*. Or did you never hear of giving orders for the week following how servants shall be employed?

Also inquire if you have not done *worldly business* on the sabbath-day. You have not perhaps opened your shop; but have you not delivered things out of it? You have not made your goods; but have you not encroached on the sabbath by wandering far and near to carry them home? by receiving or paying money, by settling accounts, by transacting business, by letter, or by such-like ways, have you never invaded the sanctification of the sabbath? Perhaps you are saying, "Yes, I have done such things; but what then? these are but trifles; and, besides, they could not conveniently be avoided." They are but trifles, you say. But, trifles as they are, have they not hindered you from making a religious use of the Lord's day; interrupting serious thoughts, and preventing serious employments? And, if so, have they not perverted the holy design of the sabbath, with respect both to God's glory and your spiritual benefit? And how then can you call them trifles? Yea, but still you insist they could not conveniently be avoided. This I deny in general; not one in fifty of them but might just as conveniently have been done another day. If indeed it were of absolute necessity, or the thing of real and particular importance, which could not be prevented by being done before, nor be delayed to another day, though not in the utmost strictness of the word *necessary*, the matter

were otherwise. In such case, to speak my own judgment, though the thing be of a worldly nature, yet the doing it is a duty which supersedes the positive institution of the sabbath in that instance; for in such cases the rule is, *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice*. Now therefore here is the only exception; if it be an act either of absolute necessity, or of real and special moment, and so circumstanced as described, then the sabbath is not broken. See, then, were the worldly things you have done on the Lord's day all of them of necessity, of such particular and pressing importance? (and particular things you know cannot happen often in their very nature, for then they would cease to be particular.) That is the first qualification of worldly things that may or rather ought to be done on the Lord's day. But, then, could none of them have been prevented by doing them before, had there been proper care and foresight? That they could not, is the second qualification. And, further, might none of them have been put off to another day? The negative to this is the third qualification. Under this rule, if you will, you may easily bring your conduct respecting worldly affairs on the sabbath-day under examination. But, in coming to a determination, let us diligently remember that we may not take such allowances as God has not given us; nor call that a work of importance or necessity which God will reckon licentiousness. Thus much of resting from worldly affairs on the sabbath. I go on,

Secondly.—To help you in the further *inquiry*,

whether, supposing you have rested from worldly affairs, you have also *sanctified* that rest. To sanctify the sabbath-day is to keep it holy. That is the express word of the commandment: *Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy.* And common sense must own that God had some higher design in forbidding us to work than to set us to be idle. Yet I think, according to the interpretation which common practice puts on this commandment, the words might run thus: “Remember the sabbath-day to take thy pleasure therein.” To say the truth, we have all too much found our own pleasure on this day; as I fear will be but too manifest, while I am proposing to you for examination some hints regarding the sanctification of the Lord’s day.

In general, therefore, the sabbath is sanctified when it is spent with God, in humble and thankful acknowledgments of his love in creating us, and of his infinite mercy in redeeming us by Jesus Christ, who is gone into heaven to prepare a place for us. Then we should be examining our hearts and lives, humbling ourselves for our sins, stirring up the grace that is in us, exercising repentance, faith, hope, and charity; above all, looking forward *to the rest that remaineth for the people of God* *. We should enter into that which is within the veil, whither the forerunner is for us entered †; we must place Jesus on his throne in our heart as an almighty, all-sufficient, desirable, victorious, approaching Redeemer; get our souls warmed

* Heb. iv. 9.

† vi. 19, 20.

into an humble, penitent, believing frame, full of joy, full of glory, full of praise, full of gratitude. We must get up into the mount, and behold the promised land, till every earthly thing is no longer valued, till inspired with renewed zeal we are ready to fight our way to the promised inheritance, till all the afflictions we have to struggle with are found light in comparison of that exceeding weight of glory we have in our eyes. This is to sanctify the seventh day; this is to remember a risen and exalted Redeemer; this is to foretaste the everlasting rest, and to rest from sin. And think you, is not one such day better than a thousand? O! what do they lose who make the sabbath a day of carnal pleasure? who pass it in wandering, and visiting, and dressing, and every kind of idleness? who have no other design on the Lord's day than to do nothing? or who go abroad to the church and elsewhere to see and to be seen? who contrive parties of pleasure, and mutually conspire to forget God? What do these lose? yea, what guilt, what vengeance, do they not incur? Is this to sanctify the Lord's day? Let us consider all of us. The custom of the world can signify nothing against a commandment of God. Have we kept the sabbath-day holy? or do we not see many sabbaths behind us which were given to pleasure? What did we think of? was it not *pleasure?* or *talk* of but vain things? or do but what our carnal hearts listed? and let us be assured that sabbath-idleness is of all idleness the most sinful. To be idle at any time is bad enough; but to be idle, when God so expressly commands us

to be employed about him, when his honour is so interested, when it is the very harvest-time for heaven and glory! then to be idle, what a sin, what a shame it is! the remembrance of it will cost us bitter tears sooner or later. See, then, what hath been the use you have made of the sabbath in general: hath it been sanctified to the Lord, or given to sloth and pleasure?—But more particularly the sanctification of this rest lies within the compass of these three things:—

I.—*Public exercises.*

II.—*Private exercises.*

III.—*Religious communication.*

There is no question to be made but that the whole sabbath should be taken up in one or another of these employments; and that whenever we step aside from them, unless in the excepted cases before mentioned, we break the fourth commandment.

First.—As to *public worship.* Public worship is the assembling of God's people, to his glory, in prayer, praise, hearing the word, and communicating. Here, therefore, if at any time you have forborne to come to public worship on any unwarrantable cause; if your design in coming hath been any thing else beside the glorifying of God; if you have not heartily joined with the congregation upon this design of glorifying God in every part of worship, in prayer and praise, in hearing and communicating; so far as you have failed herein, you have not duly sanctified the Lord's day in public worship. See, then: Did you never absent yourself from God's worship needlessly; as

through sloth, idleness, business, or for the sake of pleasing company, or because you said you could do as well at home? Did you always come to public worship with a design to own and honour God? What! did you never come inconsiderately, or out of curiosity, you did not know why, because it was the custom; or because it was a sort of entertainment; it may be to make an appearance, and to be taken notice of for one thing or other? And then again, have you always laboured to join in the several parts of worship with attention, reverence, and suitable affections? to loathe yourself while speaking of your sins, and to exalt God's mercy and majesty while singing his praises, to hear his holy word with all modesty, meekness, and humility, and to wait at his table with becoming fervency and devotion? Say, upon the whole, how have you acted your part in public worship? Have you done it to the glory of God? or have you not sought your own pleasure whether in absenting from, or when you have approached unto, the courts of the Lord?

Secondly.—*Private exercises* were said to be another part of our duty in sanctifying the Lord's day. By these I mean the duties of secret prayer, examination, reading, and meditation, in which every Christian ought to be employed alone in certain convenient portions of the sabbath. Consider, then, what answer can you make on this head? what do you say respecting the duties of the closet on the Lord's day? Have they never been neglected, never slighted? The mornings, noons, and evenings of the sabbaths, how

have they been spent? Have you at none of these seasons left your closet to take your pleasure? perhaps never thought of any thing else you had to do than to take your pleasure and amuse yourself, as thinking Sunday the time for recreation? And so again,

Thirdly.—What answer can you make regarding *religious communication*? In this respect, too, have you never *spoken your own words* on the Lord's day? I wish we may all deeply lay this to heart; for the tongue is an unruly member. Unprofitable conversation is the bane of sanctifying the sabbath. But I ask, have you not spoken your own words? Let us all impartially judge, and we shall all certainly condemn ourselves in this particular. Yet let us not lie down under the condemnation; but, confessing our sin in this respect, and earnestly imploring pardon for Jesus Christ's sake, let us henceforward take heed to our ways, that we do not thus any longer offend with our tongue. Consider, my brethren, what has been your conversation in the morning before you have come to this house: has it been about insignificant things? How sad a preparation for public worship? And what have you done at noon? what! still vanity? And then in the evening; what! nothing but unprofitable talk, as if on purpose to forget what had been doing at the church, and to lose the serious impressions that had been made on the mind? To say the least, if we cannot converse together upon religious things on the Lord's day, it were much better we should keep asunder. But the shame of being thought

religious, the custom of visiting on this day, and method of running together in public places, where it is unreasonable to expect one serious word should be spoken, have so established unprofitable conversation on the sabbath, that we are come to speak our own words without suspicion of our doing any thing amiss, and thereby have both destroyed that honour due to the day, and that spiritual advantage we should otherwise reap from it. I wish we would try the difference; and see what keeping alone or conversing only on religious subjects would produce. It is a pitiable thing, that, while we wish well to our souls, we should be taking in poison with our meat every Lord's day.

By this time we may be able to judge whether we have ceased on the sabbath-day from worldly affairs to good purpose. As far as we sanctified the Lord's day in public, in private, and in all our communications, we have done this; but as far as we have failed herein, and sought our own pleasure, we have not. And if this matter be well sought into, I suppose we shall all find we have abundance to answer for at the judgment-seat of Christ.

The *third* and last thing contained in a due observance of the Lord's day was said to be a right aim in ceasing from worldly labours, and in exercising the religious observances just mentioned. Now the righteousness of the aim is, when there is a correspondence between our design in keeping and God's design in instituting the sabbath; which was said in the introduction of this discourse to be twofold.

I.—*His glory.*

II.—*Our spiritual profit.*

First.—Hath then our design, in the observance we have paid to the sabbath, principally been to glorify God? *I gave them my sabbaths*, says God, *to be a sign between me and them**; namely, a sign that I the Lord Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, *am their God*, and they consequently my people. The sabbath was to be a sign of this. How so? Why because God hath appointed it so to be; having enjoined his people to sanctify the seventh day for this purpose; to the end that they observing this his institution, by meeting together to worship him, all the world may know he is the God they profess, and they the people whom he will bless and preserve. So you see the due observance of the sabbath, especially in all the parts of public worship, reverently and humbly, is the great instituted means of our professing God to be our God. Indeed there is no other proper means of making such profession. How should the world know whom we serve but by the significant method here provided for us, wherein we, laying aside all worldly things at God's command, do meet and join together in worship in honour of his name? The consequence of this is, that every Christian coming into public worship, and observing the Lord's day, doth hereby own God in Christ as his God; doth take this public way of making such acknowledgment, and of professing that as a lost sinner he

* Ezek. xx. 12—20.

looks for salvation upon that glorious plan contrived by the blessed Trinity, in which the Father sends, the Son comes, and the Holy Ghost applies what the Son so sent of the Father hath effected. Now yourselves only can judge whether to make profession of the Trinity, and of faith in Christ as the only ground of your hope in time and eternity, hath been your aim in observing the Lord's day, and particularly in coming to public Christian worship; which to do is indeed mere folly if a man have not this faith. If this were more the *believer's* aim in observing the Lord's day, it would have a direct influence to his observing it more strictly. Besides this,

Secondly.—Hath your aim in sanctifying the Lord's day been the sanctification of your own soul? The sabbath, considered as a rest, immediately leads our faith forward to the rest remaining for believers in heaven; and at the same time, by enjoining us to cease from labour, doth represent to us the necessity of ceasing from sin in the way to that glory which shall be revealed. It is a gracious design to have heaven in the eye, under the observance of the weekly rest, to be looking to an exalted Redeemer, so both enlivening our hope of the eternal inheritance, and mortifying under the influence of that hope the power of sin. “ Well may the believer say, this is a temporary rest, “ yet it is a gracious one, it gives me opportunity to “ consider with more attention my eternal rest: how “ glorious, how delightful, how perfect, how end- “ less! it is no imagination. Jesus is gone before “ to prepare a place, and he will come again; I see

“ him already by faith on the clouds, he calls from
“ their dust the departed saints, he places them near
“ him on the right hand, he bids them enter into his
“ joy. They live, they reign for ever; they are for
“ ever with their Lord. Come then, my soul, thou
“ wilt not barter heaven for a poor vain world.
“ Down, down, ye vile lusts; ye foes to my Saviour
“ and my soul, I forsake you all; pleasure, interest,
“ ease, honour, esteem, and pride, I sacrifice you all
“ to my eternal hopes.” You cannot but say such
views as these are altogether becoming the day of re-
membering a risen Redeemer gone away into heaven.
But are they yours? Do you thus sanctify the Lord’s
day, and have you always thus sanctified it? O for
how much nobler purposes was this day designed than
for vanity, pleasure, and sloth!

From what hath been said on the sabbath, I am
confident you will all see cause enough of condemna-
tion and of humiliation. You belong to a crucified
Master; see in this instance again how you have pierced
him. And while you seek and humbly rely on the
pardon of these sins through the merit of his blood,
let that blood influence you to a godly sorrow and
hatred of all your transgressions. “ So Jesus shall
“ see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied;” to
him, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be glory,
honour, and praise, world without end. *Amen.*

S E R M O N XXXIII.

GALATIANS iii. 24.

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

FROM a distinct consideration of the duties respecting godliness required of us in the four first commandments, we have abundantly seen that use of the law described in the text, namely, of serving as a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ. These commandments applied to our consciences have condemned us all; and, if we have duly considered the curse annexed to every single breach of them, the sense of our manifold guilt will needs bring us unto Christ, that we may be accepted by God's mercy through the merit of his perfect righteousness. I say, we have all been condemned, for who among us is guiltless? Review only what we have gone over, and say if one and all be not guilty. Doth not the following confession suit every one of us? "Lord, thou knowest my heart, and my ways are not hid from thee. Wilt thou be exact to mark what is done amiss? Thou knowest I have had other gods before thee; I have set up my worldly idols in my

“ heart; worldly things I have loved too much, and
“ trusted in too much, and feared the loss of them
“ beyond all things; but to love thee, to trust in and
“ fear thee, how little has my heart known to do this?
“ Thou Searcher of hearts knowest what a stranger I
“ have been to thee, how little I have known thee,
“ or desired or endeavoured to know thee, how sadly
“ I have forgotten thee, how much of my days is
“ gone by and thou wast not in all my thoughts;
“ yea, and when I have thought of thee, how unbecomingly
“ it has been; with how little esteem and
“ gratitude, with how little reverence, with how
“ much distrust of thee and murmuring against thee!
“ O enter not into judgment with thy servant for
“ having had other gods before thee! but have mercy
“ upon me, and incline my heart to keep this law.—
“ And hast thou charged me, O sovereign God, to
“ bow down and worship before thee? to pray without
“ ceasing, to meditate on thy word, to observe
“ thy ordinances? What then shall I answer for all
“ the slights I have put upon thy word and ministry,
“ thy worship and sacraments, for all my sloth, coldness,
“ negligence, and formality, in calling upon thy
“ name? Are all my breaches of covenant-vows, all
“ my disrespectful approaches to and neglects of thy
“ word, all my lifeless wandering prayers; are these
“ all noted in thy book of remembrance against me?
“ Then, Lord, have mercy upon me, for my sins
“ against thy second commandment are more in
“ number than the hairs of my head.—And hast thou
“ also charged me to have respect unto and glorify

“ thee in all the words of my tongue, and all the
“ actions of my life? Requiest thou of me so to
“ speak, and so to act, as that in all thou mayest be
“ glorified; and that everywhere, and in all places,
“ it should be made manifest in me that I am thy
“ servant, thine only; my conduct always such as
“ that in all things thou mayest be honoured, and the
“ whole world know me to be thy servant? So thou
“ chargest, and I confess that thy charge is holy, just,
“ and good; so thou oughtest in all things to be
“ magnified. But how far have I been from bring-
“ ing this just tribute of glory to thy name! My
“ conduct, how often has it been disgraceful to my
“ profession, vain, carnal, worldly, conformed to
“ the ways and customs of an evil generation! And
“ this tongue, how continually hath it spoken idly,
“ or lightly, or rashly, or angrily, or wantonly, or
“ profanely! Lord, thou knowest there is no end of
“ my transgressions; thy mercies only are more in
“ number: have mercy upon me, O my God, and
“ incline my heart to keep this law.—Also it is thy
“ commandment that I should remember the sab-
“ bath-day to keep it holy; that I should cease from
“ my worldly cares and business, not to pass the con-
“ secrated hours in idleness or pleasure, or intem-
“ perance, but by exercises of private and public
“ worship that I should sanctify the day wholly to the
“ Lord. But how often have worldly things em-
“ ployed my hands, how much more often my
“ tongue, how most of all my thoughts, in these sa-
“ cred hours! and even when I have ceased from

“ worldly affairs, how little have I ceased from my
“ own pleasure! what unprofitable conversations,
“ what needless visitings, what idle wanderings, lie
“ upon the records of my memory! At best, how
“ little have I sanctified thy day by sacred meditation
“ and heavenly employments; how little laboured to
“ ascend unto the rest above, and pass the hours with
“ an exalted Jesus, to the glory of thy name and the
“ spiritual advantage of my immortal soul! Mercy,
“ Lord, mercy upon a miserable sabbath-breaker!
“ How infinitely indebted am I to the blood of Christ,
“ that cleanseth from all sin!” After such a review
of these first commandments, more immediately re-
garding God, it will be easy to conclude we shall not
be found guiltless in those of the second table, which
are then only kept, when observance of them arises
from a sense and a discharge of that duty we owe to
God required in the first. Nevertheless, in order to
favour that self-righteous scheme so pleasing to our
hearts, that we might think well of ourselves, it has
been the customary manner to explain the commands
of the second table in a literal sense, and even to take
no notice of what the four first commandments en-
join: insomuch that the person who has abstained
from the three gross acts of murder, adultery, and
theft, has been ready to say, ‘ I have kept all the com-
‘ mandments from my youth,’ and am certainly free in
this matter: than which nothing leads more directly
to detain souls in a damnable security. To remove
this soul-ruining mistake, there needs no more than to
open the law in its true spiritual sense, as our Lord,

in opposition to such destructive teachings, has taught us to do: and then the whole world is found guilty before God, as has been abundantly made manifest to your own consciences in opening the commandments already spoken to. With the same design I proceed now to submit to your inquiry what the fifth commandment requires of us.

Honour thy father and mother. This is the first commandment regarding the duty we owe one another; and is deservedly set in the first place, because it is the sum of all those duties we owe to our neighbour, and so of the largest latitude and extent, its observance or non-observance also being of the greatest importance to the church of God. From whence you may easily see, that a regard or disregard to this commandment will beyond all other things manifest the state and condition of our souls. When our regard to God is carried into and regulates our temper and conduct in the various relations we bear to each other as superiors, inferiors, and equals, it will be certain and evident we have the honour of his government at heart. But if our pretences to piety and devotion have not so happy an effect upon our behaviour one toward another, and, while we are exact and diligent in attendances on worship, we are stubborn inferiors, haughty superiors, and self-willed equals, it is plain our proud hearts have never been humbled, we are not endued with the mind of Jesus, nor partakers of his spiritual kingdom; and all our religion is vain. Thus much was needful to be said in general. I come now to open this commandment for ex-

amination and humiliation. And the extent of it being great, it will demand more of our time.

Honour thy father and thy mother. To honour is to own the dignity, eminence, and authority, which God hath put on the objects to be honoured, and this both in an internal reverence of them in the mind, and by an external expression of it in conduct.

Thy father and mother : that is, not only thy natural parents, but all others whom God hath marked out and distinguished by *dignity* and *excellency*, as he has done thy natural parents. Where there is no dignity nor excellency, there is no place for reverence and honour.

On the other hand, all to whom God has given dignity and excellency are hereby equally, though more implicitly, enjoined not to use it to their own ends, but to the glory of God, and the benefit of those whom God has made inferior to them.

This is the general design of the commandment. And you see it takes in all the relations we stand in to one another as superiors and inferiors. I will open the principal of them for your examination. And,

I.—*The duty of children towards their parents, and of parents towards their children.* This shall be the matter of our present inquiry.

Previous to what will be said upon the duties of parents and children, I would observe there is such a thing as *natural affection*, which I suppose does not come within the scope of this commandment. The Apostle indeed speaks of many, namely, parents and

children, who were without this natural affection*; but then he is describing not persons transgressing this or any other part of the written law of God, but Heathens, departed from the light they had, and sunk in vice to that degree, as to have lost those very feelings and practices, which in common with other animals they were urged to by instinct. To say therefore that to be wanting in natural affection is a transgression of the *fifth* commandment, is not, I conceive, to understand the commandment rightly, which is not designed to bid us do that which we by the mere instinct of nature alone are inclined to do, and do actually without any thought of God's will in the matter, till, by the indulgence of our lusts, these our very natural instincts are destroyed, and we become more unnatural than the brutes; but this commandment requires of us that which we are not in the least degree by nature inclined to do, namely, as *parents* to use our authority over our children not for our own ends, but for God's glory in their spiritual welfare; and as *children* to honour our parents, because they bear the authority of God towards us and over us. Hence by the way it is easy to see,

First.—That natural affection is no virtue, however in other respects good and desirable it may be: for you see it is but a mere instinct, and just no more than what is common to the beasts with us. Let not then parents or children, the former especially, in whom

* Rom. i. 31.

this natural instinct is strongest, mistake this for the duty they owe one to the other by virtue of this commandment; nor apprehend that because this natural affection does beget continual tenderness, diligence, and care, therefore the duty of parent or child is effectually discharged. The very worst parents or children, who have lost all sense of duty, will hardly be able altogether to extinguish this natural principle, which also is often found acting in the highest degree where there is not any thought of the child's salvation on one side, nor of the honour due to parents on the other.

Yet, *secondly*.—We may see also, that if this natural affection be lost, it can only be in consequence of the most advanced measure of sin. Self-will and self-pleasing must have entirely engrossed the soul, seeing not only all principles of religion are excluded, but also all natural principles are eradicated by it. And,

Thirdly.—I would observe on this matter, that though this natural affection be a great help in doing many duties on either side, which would otherwise be exceedingly disagreeable and painful; yet on the other hand it is very apt to degenerate into a destructive fondness in parents towards children, causing the parent to indulge them in their humours, to give them their own will, not to endure to cross, much less to correct them; in short, to give up all authority, and to leave the child to do as he pleases, till being unrestrained he is grown peevish, wilful, desperate, intolerable to all, and a great grief of heart even to the

fond parent, whose fondness has been indeed the main cause of the child's undoing. So you may see fondness is a vicious excess and abuse of natural affection that cannot be too much guarded against, especially by mothers, in whom natural affection is strongest, and who therefore are most liable to fall into this destructive way of indulging their children to please themselves. I do not stop to make answer to many excuses which fondness, is ready to plead for itself; only I am desirous it may be observed that when I find fault with *fondness* I do not mean to blame *natural affection*, but only that it should be kept within its proper bounds. And what these are you shall now see, while I am describing,

First.—The duty of parents towards their children, as required by this Commandment. And that will be distinctly seen, if this one thing be carefully observed, that God by this commandment requiring children on pain of his wrath to honour their parents, does thereby himself expressly put a power into the parent's hands. Now though parents must needs have a natural power over their children, in consequence of their begetting, nourishing, and caring for them, yet a divine additional power to enforce upon children all their obligations, by the express revealed authority of God himself, parents could not have, unless God had been pleased to give it them. But to what end must we suppose God has put so solemn a power into the hands of parents? What, to swell them up with pride, and that they may use it tyrannically over their children? God forbid. What, then, to enable

the parents more effectually to provide for the temporal prosperity of their children? No, nor this neither, any further than such an authority in temporal things might serve the higher purpose of promoting God's glory in the Christian education of children, and their being placed in such a state of life as might best contribute to their living to the same glory, and to the eternal welfare of their own souls. God's end is his own glory in all things; and therefore, when he adds his revealed authority to the natural authority of the parent, it is with this design, that they may bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. This being kept in view, it will be no difficult matter for all parents to see if they have done their duty to their children, which will be found within the following particulars:—

First.—Aiming at their religious conduct.

Secondly.—Setting them a good example.

Thirdly.—Instructing them.

Fourthly.—Encouraging them in all good ways.

Fifthly.—Being gentle toward them.

Sixthly.—Seasonably correcting them.

Seventhly.—Placing them in a proper calling.

Eighthly.—Providing for them.

Ninthly.—Taking care how they marry.

Tenthly.—To say all, praying for them. So far as parents have come short, or acted contrary to any of these things, they have sinned against their children, and broken the fifth commandment. A short word will be sufficient upon each.

First.—It is the duty of parents to aim at the religious education of their children above all things. God saith of Abraham, *I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord* *. This you find was Abraham's aim in the use of that authority God had given him over his children. And, parents, can you say it has been yours, your great aim, always the principle that governed you in your conduct towards your children and guidance of them? Hath it really been your great aim and endeavour that this might be effected? And in comparison of this have you been little solicitous about their accomplishments or prosperity in the world? Be assured if it has not, if to bring them up in the fear of God has not been the principal object of your care, that which has regulated all your conduct respecting them, you have not done the least part of your duty towards them: if you have had no higher prospects than for their well-doing in the world, or have been regarding them as your property, and have been devising to get yourself a name in them, you have gone out of the way of your duty, and have forgotten for what end God gave you authority over them. Has the glory of God in your children's religious behaviour been your grand aim, regulating every step you have taken in your management of them? This is the leading inquiry. And hereupon, let it be asked,

* Gen. xviii. 19.

Secondly.—Have you been setting them such an example as might best tend to form their minds to religion on the one side, and to discourage vice in them on the other? Have you carefully endeavoured they should see in you every thing which might dispose them to love and practise religion; should see in you an engaging pattern of humility and faith, of heavenly-mindedness and the love of God, of charity and meekness, of deadness to the world respecting its honours, interests, and pleasures; that they should see you feared God, studied above all things to please him, and would not willingly displease him, to please all the men or to get all the things of the whole world; that they should see you delighted in worshipping God by the constant, regular, devout, and solemn worship you kept up daily in your family, and by the time they must know you spent with God in private in your closet? And, on the other side, have they seen every thing in you which might tend to discourage vice in them; how hateful it was to you, how careful you were to avoid it? You have not set before them a pattern of pleasure, and company-keeping, and idleness, and vanity? They have not seen you indulging over the glass, or pampering your body by gluttonous living? You have not been an example to them of lewdness or swearing, of ambition or covetousness, of sabbath-breaking or licentiousness, of pride and self-will, and anger and violence, expressed in your countenance and words, than which nothing is or can be a more hurtful example to children? Thus have you

endeavoured by your example to nurture your children in the ways of God?

Thirdly.—Have you carefully instructed your children in the knowledge of Christ? *These words that I command thee this day shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children* *. You see it is the parents' duty themselves to catechise and instruct their children as far as they are able. It is the least part of this to teach them by rote the catechism and their prayers; both should be explained to them by the parents, and the children taught to regard them both as matters of the last and best importance: in doing which, what is wanting in the parent's ability must be made up in his diligence. Nor on any pretence must this point of instruction be put over by the parents to the schoolmaster and minister, who ordinarily will be able to do little if the parents' authority and co-operating instruction be wanting to give weight to their endeavours. Parents must be diligent and frequent in this work themselves, and cause their children also to attend and mind the instructions of the school and the church, particularly the latter; in which regard I have matter of complaint against many parents among you, who give themselves no care to cause their children to attend the public catechising, at least when they are grown to such years as to be capable of any considerable improvement; but leave the young persons to themselves to come or not

* Deut. vi. 6, 7.

as they see fit, and as suits their own humours. Wherefore I earnestly beseech and require all parents to look to it that their young ones give their attendance, and that not promiscuously in the congregation as part of the audience (in which case they do nothing but play and disturb all near them), but in the place assigned them; that they may not only hear, but render an account of what they have heard.—The third duty then of parents was *instruction*. Consider if you have nothing to charge yourself with on this head.

Fourthly.—Have you encouraged your children in all good ways? And in the parents' power it is to encourage their children by giving them helps, and shewing themselves peculiarly delighted in them when they discover any serious marks of religion on their minds. Indeed parents must not make their children proud upon any attainments; but it is in their power without doing this to encourage them. They may shew their children that they esteem religion as not only the greatest ornament, but the richest blessing, they wish for them. They may let their children know that they pray daily for God's grace upon their hearts; and that they have little concern about their prosperity in this world, in comparison with what they feel for their being the servants of Christ and inheritors of everlasting life. The question is, have parents according to their ability heartily endeavoured to encourage their children in the ways of religion? It must be a horrid part in a parent to do the contrary and to discourage them from the ways of godliness.

O how will they answer it to their children, perhaps eternally lost through this very thing, when they shall stand before the judgment-seat of the Lord Jesus! “There are not a few (saith a sensible writer), who seem afraid, lest, by being trained up in the holy religion of Christ, their children should be brought too much out of love with this world, and learn that piece of ill husbandry (as they esteem it) to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord.”

Fifthly.—Have you been gentle towards your children? *Fathers*, saith the Apostle, *provoke not your children to wrath* *. Harshness in the parent is a fruit of the very same stock with stubbornness in the child; both proceed from self-will indulged. There is no good to be expected from harshness; on the contrary, it is the natural parent of lying, hypocrisy, and many other sins, till the child is grown old enough no longer to endure it, and breaks out into absolute waywardness and independency. The parent must hold his authority, yet must use it with a gentle hand. Gentleness does not lie in humouring children, but by mild and prudential measures, rather than by heat and violence, bringing them to compliance. This gentleness in all cases is needful, but especially in the point of religion, lest by means of force and severity children become hypocrites instead of Christians. Yet at proper seasons,

Sixthly.—Have you also corrected your children?

* Ephes. vi. 4.

If you have, let me ask for what? Their vices, I hope not their indiscretions, particularly the two great vices of children, stubbornness and idleness? *Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; the rod of correction shall drive it far from him**. Here by foolishness you must understand wickedness, which, saith the Spirit, is bound in the heart of the child; this is what we are all born with; and it is this, and this alone, the rod of correction must drive out. The breakings-out of natural corruption must be restrained by the parents interposing their chastising authority. So you see parents may not correct their children for their own pleasure, to gratify their own passions; they may not correct them for their indiscretions, for being children: but for their bad tempers they may and must correct them. That is their duty to them; as to neglect it shews but small love of their souls, though very great and very sinful fondness for their persons. Yet too often we shall see children punished for their indiscretions, and their vices escaping; and the rod more frequently used to indulge the bad humours of the parent than to correct those of the child. What say you now, have you not withholden the rod; or have you used it only in restraining your children's corruptions? If you have spared the rod, you have laid aside your authority; if you have used it for your own pleasure, you have abused it. The

Seventh duty of parents is to place their children in a proper calling; that is, such an one as, their cir-

* Prov. xxii. 15

cumstances and talents considered, will best contribute to their doing God service in the world, and will least expose them to temptations. In determining this important matter, the parent must have directly in his eye the glory of God and the spiritual welfare of the child. It is this, and not what will in a worldly view be most advantageous, must guide his determinations. The manifold daily abuses of this kind should cause parents seriously to consider and to lay to heart by what motives they have been directed in a matter wherewith not only the present prosperity but the future happiness of their children stands so nearly connected : and in this view the making the only rule of determination what the child likes will hardly be justifiable.

Eighthly.—It is the duty of parents to lay up for their children a suitable provision : and a suitable one is that which will enable them best to exercise their calling with most advantage to God's glory, and with least temptation to their own souls. The parent is not to make indeed the leaving his children a competency an excuse for his own covetousness, and for not giving to the poor out of that wherewith God hath blessed him : but then neither is he to neglect making provision for them through sloth, nor to squander their portion in extravagant living. The proverb, that charity begins at home, seems founded in the thing now before us. A man must give to others with a more sparing hand till provision be made for his own household ; and then he must open his hand more largely in acts of liberality. But what is a competency for a child ? The answer is easy, that which will enable

him to live agreeably to his station. But how shall I know what that is, seeing people of the same station live very differently? This must be determined by the practice of prudent and serious people.

Ninthly.—I will just add a word upon the point of marriage, concerning which, as this at least is clear, that children ought not to marry without their parents' consent; so it will lie in the parents' power, and is the indispensable duty of parents, to prevent their children's marrying to graceless persons: for so the rule is *Let them marry only in the Lord* *. Grace is the first qualification; and therefore if the parent, biassed by interest, gives his consent where the person to marry his child is graceless, he betrays the trust God has put into his hand, and shamefully sins against God's glory and the soul of his child. So far is clear. But is this the whole of the parent's duty in the point of marriage? I find the patriarchs in Scripture seeking wives for their sons: and if parents did not leave so great a matter wholly to their children, as is commonly done, but would at a proper time of life seek out suitable persons for their children, proposing them to their inclinations without force or constraint, they would tread in the steps of Abraham, Isaac, and other Scripture examples, and not at all step out of the way of their duty to their children. But,

Tenthly, and lastly.—Have you been constant and importunate at the throne of grace for the spiritual

* 1 Cor. vii. 36—39.

welfare of your children? that in all these things God would direct you and bless them? Have you prayed for the grace of God to be poured into their hearts; and for that beyond all things? Are there records of such your daily intercessions written in the book of God's remembrance? And will it be found there at the judgment-day?

But I have done. Such is the duty of parents. You see how spiritual as well as important it is. You will prove yourselves by it, as many as have been in that relation. I refer the duties of children to our next meeting, when I especially wish all young persons may be present to hear on their part what a charge God has laid upon them respecting their parents by this *fifth* commandment.

S E R M O N XXXIV.

GALATIANS iii. 24.

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

THE relative duties required by the fifth commandment are now under examination for the purpose expressed in the text, that seeing ourselves condemned by the law we may humble ourselves and come unto Christ. The relation of parents and children was entered upon when we last met. Then I shewed you how God had put authority into the hands of parents ; that his design therein was his own glory in the religious education of children ; and that consequently it was the duty of parents to use their authority over their children with the simple view of educating them in the knowledge and practice of Christianity, which was branched out into several of the most important particulars in the duty of parents. I am now to speak,

Secondly.—Of the duty of children towards their parents. In this relation we must all have been ; and therefore the present subject will be of more univer-

sal concernment than the last. We have all had parents. Have we done our duty toward them? Here some perhaps will hold themselves guiltless, because their parents died when they were young: indeed in that case the obligations which are purely natural ceased; but the obligations which arise from this commandment did not: for, according to this commandment, the authority over such children, as well as the duty of a parent, devolved upon those who had the care of them, and stood in the place of parents toward them: so that the point now under consideration is of universal concern to us all.

The word of commandment is this, *Honour thy father and mother*. Observe, it is not said, bear a natural affection toward thy father and mother, but honour and reverence them. Natural affection there will be, till children grow altogether reprobate: but there may be much of this, where there is little or nothing of the reverence here commanded. A child, who is very wicked toward God, may have much natural affection for his parents. But to honour and reverence them, as bearing God's authority, and from a sense of duty to God, this is the main point, and the only mark of a truly dutiful child. Our business therefore is to see what is meant by this word *honour* thy father and thy mother, which will lay open to us the whole duty of children to parents. Now to honour has been said to be to acknowledge the dignity there is in another. Consequently to honour our parents is in all suitable ways to acknowledge that dignity and authority God has put upon

them. And this acknowledgment must be twofold.

First.—There must be an inward acknowledgment of their dignity and authority upon the heart.

Secondly.—There must be an outward expression thereof in a becoming behaviour. But, because where the one of these is the other cannot fail to be, I shall consider them together.

To honour parents implies an acknowledgment of that dignity and authority God has put upon them both, both father and mother. And where this is there will not be wanting suitable outward expressions of it. I say both father and mother, for the commandment mentions both, and requires the one to be honoured as well as the other. It requires both of them to be honoured, not for the sake of any natural accomplishments of sense and parts, or for any worldly distinctions of wealth, honour, and station, but because God's authority is put upon them equally and in common: and so the one must be honoured as well as the other, and neither of them the less because they may be without any considerable either natural or acquired endowments. Now this honour must needs imply all such things as do acknowledge God's authority in the persons of our parents, and do correspond with God's design in giving parents that authority. For though God has put authority in the parent's hand, it is plain nevertheless that neither God's glory nor the child's spiritual benefit is therein promoted, any further than the child has regard to God's

authority in the persons of his parents, considering them as set over him under and for God. From hence it is evident that the

First duty of children to parents, and that also without which they can do no part of their duty to them upon a right principle, is to reverence them as immediately appointed by God to direct their education. This is in the strictest sense to honour parents. Honour them; have regard to their authority over you. Respect that authority as God's appointment. Now, children, have you considered your parents as God's deputies, and in that view have you had a becoming reverence on your heart toward them? What! has it been the main thing causing you to reverence them, that God bid you do so? And have you indeed revered them, and always done so? and both of them, your mother as well as your father? Whatever has been their condition in life, whether poor or rich; whatever has been their conduct in general, and toward yourself, still have you revered them; not thinking yourself, by any conduct or circumstances of theirs, or by any advantages of knowledge, grace, sense, wealth, station, you may have attained beyond them, discharged in any degree from that honour which God requires you to have and bear on your heart toward them?—The opposite to this is irreverence, setting light by father or mother; making no account of them any further than we need them. This is a common fault and sin in many children, they have no reverence of their parents in their

hearts ; and they shew none in their expressions toward them. They may perhaps fear them, while they are younger ; and when they are grown up may have some respect to them through natural affection, or for the sake of what they may expect from them ; but to respect them with a godly reverence they know not. Yet the commandment doth not say Honour your father and mother because they begat you, because you live in their house, and are cared for by them : it doth not say, Honour them, while you have your dependence upon them, and then you need not honour them any longer : nor doth it say, Honour your father because he is a wise and experienced and wealthy man ; honour your mother, because she is very fond of you, and is ready to let you do as you please : but it saith, at large, without regard to circumstances, and with a peremptory command, Honour thy father and mother. Behold, I charge thee so to do. I suppose there is much failure throughout the world with regard to this godly reverence ; else we should not find so little an account made of parents, when they are no longer needed, and are grown old enough to be inconvenient or troublesome, or expensive ; else children would not be answering so pertly, and disputing so saucily, and in all things behaving so stubbornly and frowardly as many do, filling their parents' houses with noise and clamour.

From this reverence will spring out many other dispositions, which are the duties of children toward their parents. For it is manifest, if God has put authority into the parent's hand for his glory in the religious

education of children, that then it must be the duty of children humbly to acknowledge that authority, in every case to which it reaches. And so children must reverence their parents in all their *instructions, discipline, corrections, disposals, and directions*; in all which they must behave with an humble and cheerful compliance, not expecting to have their own will, but studying to please and obey their parents in all.

The *second* duty therefore of children is cheerfully and humbly to attend unto their parents' instructions. When parents are teaching their children the ways of God, examining into their conduct, shewing them the sinfulness of their nature, and the danger of such and such wrong courses taken up by them; when they are warning them of the evil of certain sins they are most liable to, as stubbornness, self-will, idleness, pride, company-keeping, or love of pleasure, vanity in dress, or any thing else; when they are giving their children directions on these heads, and requiring their careful observance of them, they are acting in the character of parents; and it is the duty of children humbly to hearken, and carefully to observe such instructions. The word of God is express on this head; *My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother* *. Nor do I understand that, in any advanced age of children, either they or the parents are discharged from this reciprocal duty as need requires. We find old Jacob sharply reprov-

* Prov. i. 8.

the conduct of his two sons in the matter of the Shechemites *; and old Eli condemned for not restraining the impiety of Hophni and Phinehas †, when they were not only grown to be men, but were in the administration of the priesthood. The question therefore is, have children meekly heard and carefully observed the instructions of their parents, relating to religious conduct? Look back and see. Were not such lessons grievous and intolerable to you? When you were warned against certain companions or practices, were you never impatient? When you were reprov'd for your faults, were you never resentful, and even ready to fling away in a rage? In your grown years, have you not thought, what have my parents to do with me? And when an affectionate mother may have offered you some serious counsel, have you not thought yourselves particularly entitled to laugh at it, and disregard it? perhaps behaved so irreverently to your parents, that they have been afraid to speak freely to you; and have incurred Eli's sin, through fear of displeasing you?

The *third* duty of children is cheerfully to submit to the parents' *discipline*. By this I mean the religious discipline or government of the family. When Joshua said, *As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord ‡*, he spake like one who had a proper sense of the authority God had put into his hands. He was resolv'd God should be served in his house, and it was the duty of his children duly to conform to the order

* Gen. xxxiv. 30. † 1 Sam. iii. 13. ‡ Joshua xxiv. 15.

and regulations he made therein. While the pious parent in the fear of God will allow no bad orders within his walls, expects all his dependents to attend the family-worship, and forbids all idle wanderings abroad on the Lord's day, the children must dutifully comply with the whole and every particular; and that however they may be advanced to riper years. Thankfully and cheerfully, in all such orders, they must submit to the parents' pleasure; and it will be a peculiar sin against their authority to slight or shew any dislike of such religious regulations. Yet how often do children think this grievous! Have you not thought it a burden to be thus confined to religious exercises? a hardship, that your parents would not allow you such pleasures, as, you are ready to say, they themselves took when they were young? Have you not thought it a hard thing they would not permit you to wander about and take your pleasure on Sundays? And have you not often undutifully deceived them by feigned pretences in one and another of these particulars?

Fourthly.—It is the duty of children cheerfully to submit to the *corrections* of their parents, and humbly to profit by them. By correction I mean any method the parent uses for restraining the vices of his children. And under correction it is the child's duty,

I.—To be humbled for his fault.

II.—To be grieved for having incurred his parents' displeasure.

III.—To submit to the reproof. And,

IV.—To endeavour without delay to recover God's

favour and his parents' also. And let me add, it is the duty of children thus to behave under the corrections of their parents, whether they be more or less severe, whether of the rod or the tongue, whether of father or mother.

First.—They must be humbled for their fault, whatever it be, whether lying, or swearing, or idleness, or company-keeping, or whatever else. They must not deny they have done amiss, and set about to excuse themselves; as if they could escape their parents' displeasure all were well enough.

Secondly.—They must be grieved for having incurred their parents' displeasure. For *that* they must principally be grieved, and not for the correction they have brought on themselves.

Thirdly.—They must submit to the chastisement; not be angry with their parents for doing their duty to them; but own their fault, and confess they deserve and need the correction. A hard lesson for a proud heart.

Fourthly.—They must seek God's forgiveness and their parents'. Alas! how little is the former of these thought of by stubborn children! and how loth are they to conform to the latter! Instead of asking the parents forgiveness, and taking every measure to express a hearty sorrow for being deservedly under the parents' displeasure, they grow sullen, appear dissatisfied, meditate revenge on those who may have given as they suppose information, and study rather how to bring their parents to compliance than to make any

themselves. Sometimes this grows up to an intolerable insolence ; they will stay no longer in the house, not they ; what care they for their parents ? with a deal of such threatening wilful language behind their parents' back, if not to their faces ; which shews a desperate pitch of wickedness, and a total loss of all reverence towards parents, or duty toward God. Of such it is said in Deuteronomy, *If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother ; and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them ; then shall his father and mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city ; and all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die**.

Fifthly.—Have you cheerfully submitted to the *disposals* of your parents ? This is another duty of children, to leave the management of themselves in the manner of their education to their parents' will. Children of the one sex must not affect any other schools or callings than their parents provide for them ; nor those of the other such dress or pleasure as their parents do not see fit for them. And in these things they must study not only to submit to, but to please, their parents, shewing all cheerfulness in doing as they are bid. There is no true reverence of parents if children want to have their own will in such matters ; and though they submit, yet do it unthank-

* Deut. xxi. 18, 19, 20, 21.

fully, as we say. Jesus, you know, went down readily with his parents to Nazareth, and was subject unto them. It is really a graceless saying from a child to a parent, however innocently it may seem to be spoken, "I will not be of that trade or profession; or why should not I do as this and that young person does?" Dutiful children dispute nothing, but cheerfully submit to what their parents order; and that without making any questionings upon the matter. But I suppose this is not the common case of children. Too often young persons will be for taking the management of themselves out of their parents' hands as soon as possible, and when indeed they are utterly unfit to judge of what is proper for them; they will shew themselves displeas'd with the dispositions their parents are making for them, and will try all the arts of stubbornness and fondness to bring their parents to compliance. You may hear them talking already of what they will do when they are men and their own masters, and impatiently longing for that season. Meantime, as that advances, you may see disregard to parental authority advancing with it, and new liberties daily taken in self-government. And now the young head is wise enough to set up for itself, regards parents no further than according to the worldly expectations had from them, manages all things at its own discretion, and adventures into the most important passages of life without any respect to the authority or judgment of parents. What I chiefly hint at in these last words is the point of marriage; concerning which I would wish all young persons to be sensible,

that to engage their affections so far as to put it out of their parents' power with any prudence to withhold their consent, and then to ask their approbation, is indeed at the most but to pay them a compliment, and that a coarse one too; and which they do not pay from any reverence, but through a sort of slavish fear, and because they cannot marry without their parents' assistance. To say the truth, as many parents regard their children as their property, considering them only as those with whom they may do what they will, so many children in their turn seem to have no other notion of their parents; they look on what their parents have as theirs, and that is all they mind; they take advantage of their parents' circumstances to dispose of themselves, and will think themselves hardly dealt with if their parents do not come into their measures; so indeed, as I have said, using their parents no otherwise than as their property.

Sixthly.—It is the duty of children to submit reverently to the *directions* of their parents in all lawful things. I add this in the place of many other particulars that might be mentioned, and in order to make you sensible that the commandment is so large, as to require a reverent obedience to parents in every lawful case. There can be but this one exception, if the parents' directions should be contrary to conscience towards God: in all other cases the rule holds, *Children, obey your parents in all things**. See how large the rule is, in all things, great as well as little,

* Coloss. iii. 20.

and little as well as great. In things of greater importance the matter is clear, to disobey is to dishonour. But is it not so in lesser things? Certainly it is. For if the thing directed be little, it is more easily complied with, and therefore to disobey argues a greater irreverence. Besides, these lesser things take in the generality of the parents' directions, and of the child's duty. Honour for parents will approve itself by a readiness to conform to their will in the whole of the children's conduct; and the excellent proof of it is a being pleased in doing or forbearing in the whole of the conduct as will please the father and mother, whether the matters be great things or small. Consider, then, has it been your study to please your parents in all things? to behave yourself as you knew they would have you? and has this accompanied you in their absence as well as in their presence? and that also when you could be sure they would never know what you did? And have you done this not out of constraint, but cheerfully? I know not what your conduct may have been in this respect: but there is a manifest self-willedness of conduct in many children. They want to please themselves in all things; when they are restrained from it, you may see by their faces, if not hear from their mouths, that they are dissatisfied; and they will do what they will when their parents are out of sight. What I am now speaking of is the more to be regarded, because it is in this general desire of pleasing parents, rather than in any particular act, that the honouring them, that is, the honouring God's authority in them, doth consist. And it is easy

to see, that if there be this general desire to please and obey parents in the whole conduct, a conformity with their will in more interesting cases will not be wanting: as, on the other hand, such children as have no regard to please their parents in the generality of their behaviour, cannot from a sense of duty, but only through fear or interest, comply with their will in more important particulars.

Such now is the duty of children. And you may see how exactly it corresponds in every particular with God's design in putting his authority into the parents' hands, for his own glory in the religious education of children. If parents are authorized and required to train up their children in the ways of godliness, then it must be the child's duty to reverence his parents as bearing authority for that end, to observe their religious instructions, to conform to their religious discipline, to submit to their needful corrections, to yield himself to their disposals, and in all things to be guided by their will. This is plain, otherwise the design of the commandment is frustrated; and therefore, whenever we have departed from such an honouring of our parents, we have broken the fifth commandment.

But you may say, My parents do not or did not use their authority over me with this religious design you are talking of; they took no pains to make me acquainted with a covenant God; I had no good instructions from them; and when they corrected me it was to indulge their own passions; all their disposals and directions at best, tended only to my worldly hap-

piness ; yea, and they have set me an ill example, by neglect of family-worship, and private worship in their own closets (for I know that ordinarily they have spent no time there), by sabbath-breaking, company-keeping, drunkenness, swearing, passion, and the like. And doth not such a conduct in my parents discharge me from the duty I owe them? Must I honour such parents as these? Doubtless you must. No misconduct in them toward you will justify any irreverence in you toward them : for God saith, *Honour thy father and mother*, without any limitation. But you say, how can I honour them when they are wicked? Why if they were good, the reason of your honouring them, considered as parents, is not because they are good, but because they are parents, and because God has put authority upon them as such. So you see that the authority God hath put upon them makes them honourable whether they be bad or good. And were they good, to honour them for that, and not for the authority God hath put upon them, were to go beside the commandment. Here lies the difficulty, to honour parents solely from the consideration because God has put authority upon them : and in this view it is just as difficult to honour good parents as bad ones. But how must I honour bad parents? Just as you would honour good ones. You must reverence them in your heart ; you must obey them in all lawful things ; you must study to please them ; you must speak respectfully to them ; you must not speak disrespectfully of them. You say now your parents are bad? Well then, have you ho-

noured them in this manner? Have you *reverenced* them in your heart? Or have you not licentiously taken advantage of their faults to slight them in your mind? Have you *obeyed* them in all lawful things? Or have you not set up for your own master? Have you studied to *please* them, and always to do so for conscience-sake? Have you *behaved respectfully* to them, and that even when they were behaving unkindly to you? And if you have warned them of their faults, has it been with modesty and trembling? Have you *covered those faults* as much as you might, not uncovering their nakedness, nor speaking lightly of them to others? Have you prayed for them; and also endeavoured by the meekness and humbleness of your demeanour to win their souls?

I have now suggested matter enough of inquiry upon the duty of children; and therein I suppose of humiliation. It were greatly to be wished that parents and children would lay to heart what has been said on this important subject: which, as I observed in the beginning, has the nearest connexion with our estate towards God, and a religious regard to which is among the most substantial proofs of an interest in Christ Jesus.

S E R M O N X X X V .

GALATIANS iii. 24.

*Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us
unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*

ALTHOUGH the subject undertaken from these words was designed for the Sundays in Lent, yet it will be improper to leave the consideration of that commandment we had entered upon unfinished. Therefore I will go on with the *fifth commandment*, already begun with, and submit to your consideration and examination those several other relative duties it enjoins; having already spoken to the duties of parents and children.

A *second* part of duties, required by the *fifth commandment*, are those regarding masters and servants.

First, of the duty of servants.—You must consider we have all a twofold calling; a general calling, and a particular calling. The general calling is that which is common to us all, *the profession of Christianity*. The particular is that special *station* of life, or course of employment, in which we are engaged. Now as there can be no contradiction between these two, if our special calling be an honest one; so it is the most

important proof of our being really Christians, that we faithfully serve God therein: I say, when the main thing we have in view is to serve and glorify God in our special calling, then we do most of all approve ourselves true members of Christ: as well because such special calling is the very place allotted us in which we should serve God in our generation, as because our special calling must in a manner engross all our time. What is advanced thus in general I now particularly apply to the matter before us, the case of servants.

The *first* duty of servants is to consider themselves servants of God in that their calling. *Servants*, saith St. Paul, in the sixth chapter to the Ephesians, *be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ: not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men.* Here, you see, servants are required to do their duty in their calling with singleness of heart, as unto Christ; not as if they had no more to do but to please their masters; but with good will and cheerful readiness doing their business, because God expects it of them; and to please and glorify him. This is the main qualification of a good servant; and without this none shall be so accounted in the sight of God, however diligent, faithful, and careful to please their earthly masters, they may be; for in truth such are not serving God, but themselves. Nay, but indeed it cannot be imagined

that such will faithfully and honestly serve their masters upon earth. Sense of duty to God, as members of Christ's body, and serving the Lord in that calling, will carry servants through all the duties and all the discouragements that attend this station of life. Such will not be eye-servants, but, seeing God's eye ever looking upon them, will be ever as diligent in the master's absence as in his presence; such will not more squander their master's goods than they will squander his time, but will make the most of all for the master's benefit, as being put in trust by God; nor will such be discouraged and fall into murmuring under the hardships and unkindnesses which either their masters put upon them, or at least servants will be apt to think they do. If the desire of pleasing God be wanting, and the greatest aim is to please the master, and serve their own interests, the best servants otherwise in the world will gain nothing in God's account, for *Those that despise me, saith the Lord, shall be lightly esteemed.* Nor upon strict inquiry will they be found either careful as they ought of their master's interests, or diligent as they should be at their labour; most of all, they will not endure with a proper spirit those hardships or unkindnesses they have to contend with. They will be secretly fretting under them, and ready to utter passionate and irreverent speeches; "Though I should work myself to death my master would not care," and "This is what I get for my labour." Indeed if we serve earthly masters only, this may be often said truly enough; but if we serve God in our calling of ser-

vants, it can never be said, “ Here is no consideration had of my diligence.” The true servant of Christ knows better than to say that : for, as he does not seek a reward from man for his services, so he is sure he shall not lose his reward from the hand of him whom he serves, his Master in heaven ; and hereupon is not discouraged by those hardships or unkindnesses put upon him by his master on earth. Jacob was a good servant under Laban, a covetous and hard master. Yet Laban’s severity did not cause Jacob to remit of his diligence. For twenty years together he went on serving Laban *with all his might* : as he says, *By day the drought consumed him, and by night the frost, and sleep departed from his eyes* * ; he was up early and late, and minded no weather. And what recompense did he get from Laban ? Why, “ If any thing was torn Jacob bare the loss of it ; and whatever was stolen by day or night poor Jacob must stand to it.” That there are many Labans in the world may not be questioned ; but I fear there are few Jacobs, who serve God in their calling with *his* faithfulness, diligence, and zeal for his master’s interest, and that too under so many discouragements, and so much ill treatment, as Jacob met with in return for all the services he had done Laban. The too common language is, My master does not like me ; why, then, let things go as they will ; what care I how much is lost and squandered ?—Now, servants, prove yourselves by this. What answer will you give to this question, have you been serving God in your

* Gen. xxxi. 40.

calling? If you have altogether failed here, there is a heavy account lying against you before God for your constant transgression of his fifth commandment. But suppose you had some general eye to God in your service, hath that continually attended you, so that for God's sake you have been always diligent, faithful, patient? There is no inquiry so important to servants, who would think well of their estate towards God through Jesus Christ, as this now before us. For as service is their talent, so only by resolving this inquiry can they be determined whether they have used it to the glory of God or not. And with regard to the matter of salvation, I must observe, it is of equal moment to you that you be found serving God, in your calling of servants, as it is to me that I be found so doing in my calling as a minister of the Gospel of Christ.—What I have been advancing on this head is the foundation, and that without which it is impossible to be a good servant: for conscience toward God must needs be the ground and support of all our duties, which God requireth from servants to their masters. But where there is this conscience towards God in servants there will not be wanting either *reverence* towards their masters, or a shewing that reverence by *obedience* and *honesty*, together with *prayer* for them, and for the success of their master's business in their hands; which are the remaining duties of servants, and which I come now more directly to lay before them for examination. Wherefore,

The *second* duty of servants is to *reverence* their masters. This reverence is twofold, *inward* and *outward*.

First.—Inward. Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling.* Be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward †. Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour ‡. You see God puts authority upon the master, and requires servants to respect and reverence it. As it was in parents, so here in masters, God's authority rests upon them; and for the sake of that they must be revered. If you should reverence your masters because they are wise and wealthy, this would not be the thing; for then you would not reverence them at all if they were poor or ignorant: and this I suppose is a common case with servants; while they are in families where their masters are rich and great, and keep up some authority, they will have some respect towards such masters: but do they come under such as are lower in the world, or have not so much discretion and weight with them, truly they have no respect for them at all. Yea, and in the same house you shall commonly see a kind of reverence had of the master, and very little of the mistress. In such cases it is plain there is no regard had to God's authority; to which, and not to the wisdom or wealth of the master, the reverence is due. I say, it is God's authority puts honour upon the masters; and that whether the master be rich or poor, wise or foolish, nay, good or bad. Even in bad masters God's authority must be honoured; for when St. Paul saith, *Let as many servants*

* Ephes. vi. 5. † 1 Pet. ii. 18. ‡ 1 Tim. vi. 1,

as are under the yoke count their masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed, he is speaking of unbelieving and Heathen masters, as appears from what he adds in the next verse, *And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren*; by which he shews that the masters he was before speaking of were infidels; while at the same time he intimates it is no less difficult to reverence such masters as are truly good and Christian. It is as if he should have said, “Servants, I know it is a hard matter for you to reverence your masters; if they are without religion, you will be ready to think, must or can I have any reverence for such a wicked master as this? And if your master be a real disciple of Christ, you will be apt to forget he is your master, because as a Christian all are upon a level as brethren: but whether bad or good, a disciple of Christ, or of Belial, bear an honour toward him on your heart, because God has put his authority upon him. It is a great matter, and that by which servants do a great deal of honour to Christianity, that they esteem and reverence their masters in their hearts, whatever they be: as by a contrary conduct they bring disgrace on the name of God, and the Gospel of Jesus is evil-spoken of and blasphemed.”

Secondly.—This inward must, and where it is will be accompanied by *outward reverence*; which lies chiefly in a reverent speaking and behaving to their masters, and a reverent speaking of them. Servants must not speak or act irreverently to their masters

and mistresses; *must not answer again**, saith the Apostle; must not shew a proud, sullen, undutiful spirit. But how little is there of this Christian conduct among us? Do not the most of servants, if they be in families of higher station, shew the irreverence of their hearts by a discontented sullen countenance, and an angry sturdy manner of going about their work, when in any thing they are blamed, or put out of their own way? And in families of a lower degree, is not the servant's word as good as the master's or mistress's? Are not their servants continually ready to come to terms of debate with them; and the masters often obliged to give up the matter for peace-sake? Such servants bewray the ungodliness and irreverence of their hearts by such behaviour; and indeed have not the least regard to God's authority in the persons of their masters and mistresses.—And as servants must not behave or speak irreverently to their masters, so they must not speak irreverently *of* them. It is a very bad part in a servant, to come like a spy into a family, to watch and observe every thing that passes, and then to go whispering it about here and there, without any other end to be answered than that of indulging a wanton licentious tongue and a very wicked irreverent heart. Yet it is a most ordinary thing for servants to speak too forwardly of their masters when behind their back; to proclaim their faults and weaknesses, and so to blast their reputation. And this I have observed to be a very usual thing, after

* Titus ii. 9.

servants are passed from one family to another, their new masters and mistresses encouraging them in it, out of a vain and sinful curiosity, and not considering that they themselves are laying a foundation for a like misuse of themselves, when such graceless servants shall have been gone from them to others.

The *third* duty of servants is obedience. *Servants, obey your masters in all things*; that is, in all things that are lawful: for if your master command you to lie, swear, steal, break the sabbath, or in any thing to transgress the law of God, he must not be obeyed. *In all things* must needs reach to all such things as fall within the calling of a servant. Though the master's authority doth not reach unto any that is a matter of conscience in the servant's judgment of it, as whether his servant shall be a Papist or a Protestant, and the like, yet it absolutely reaches to all that is the proper business of a servant living in the family. While a servant is in a family he must submit to all the orders and regulations of it, regarding religion and prudence; for instance, he must attend such family-worship, and observe such hours, as the master of the family has seen fit to establish. And, with regard to the matter of work, the servants must do as they are bid; must not be impatient of direction; nor murmur and grow peevish if reproved. Servants must do what they are bid cheerfully, considering, that not they, but their masters, are to guide the house. A conceited temper in servants, leading them to do just what they will, and nothing else, without being out of humour; causing them to treat their masters' and mis-

tresses' orders with slight and indifference, to do what they will and when they will, to act as if there were none in the house fit to govern but themselves, and carelessly to forget in a manner whatsoever is required of them: such a temper shews very little sense of duty to God, or reverence to masters. Servants, judge for yourselves if this has not been in a greater or lesser degree your temper and conduct. Have you been possessed with such a sense of your duty to God and your masters as has caused you to obey them in all things? Have you not been self-willed, impatient of direction, taking your own way, oftentimes out of humour when your masters would not allow you to do as you pleased; making very light of what you were bid to do, and heedlessly forgetting what was required of you? Forgetting, you say! what, is there any sin in that? Yes surely, if it be out of heedlessness: for that plainly shews a want of reverence. Consider if you have not been of this conceited disobedient spirit: and be convinced that, as far as you have, you have contracted the guilt of breaking the fifth commandment.

I must speak a word here particularly to apprentices, who perhaps have not looked on themselves as servants, though they call those who are over them masters; and may possibly judge themselves unconcerned with the duties of reverence and obedience here spoken of. Is not this too frequently the language of their heart, and what their conduct but too evidently speaks? "What care I for my master? What has he to do with me? when I have done his

“ work, he can demand no more after that of me.
“ I will go where I will, and come when I please;
“ shall he tell me? I am old enough to govern myself,
“ and do not want his directions. What is it to him
“ how much money I spend, or what company I
“ keep? It is not his business how I spend the *Sunday*,
“ or where I pass the evenings. He has threatened
“ to strike me. I wish he would. I would—.” My dear
young friends, if there be any such as I have been
describing present, will you consider that, while
you are thus behaving to your masters, you are
rebellious against God? I own, indeed, that, through
your masters’ want of resolution, or want of real love
toward you, you may many of you do nearly what
you will: but if you get the upper hand of your mas-
ters, will you be also able to do so of God? And what
will you say to him for all this irreverence and unduti-
fulness of yours to them, whom he has expressly
charged you to honour? Nay, you may see plainly
you are not only dishonouring and disobeying your
masters, but God much more: and what think you
this proud spirit of yours will end in? Be assured it
will in all probability end in your utter ruin of soul
and body. If you are old and wise enough to manage
yourselves, let us see you making a right use of this
self-management: for, depend upon it, not a truly
wise soul in the world will allow you have the
least measure of that wisdom you conceit belongs to
you till you have forsaken these ungodly, irreverent,
and undutiful courses.—Such young persons as these
are the objects of the greatest compassion; and all con-

cerned with them or for them should exert themselves to rescue them from so dangerous a condition. Their parents especially should use all their authority, lest they also by-and-by become slighted by them, and lose all power of doing them any good. But,

Fourthly.—Another duty of servants is honesty. *Not purloining, but shewing all good faithfulness.* It is the property of a faithful servant to be true to his trust, not to convert to his own profit what belongs to his master, and is committed to his care; to be diligent too at his work, that he may render to his master that for which he pays him; nay, and to be as thrifty of what is his master's as if it were his own. These three things then fall under the title of honesty in servants, a *clean hand, industrious labour, and a saving thriftiness.*

1. Servants must have a *clean hand.* Picking and stealing is most abominable in servants, and incomparably worse in them than in any others. When a person is taken into the house, as one of the family, and intrusted with so much of what is there; when the master giveth him his wages, and provides for him every thing needful for comfortable subsistence; then to fall a pilfering and plundering; this is theft of an enormous kind. If any servants have sinned this great sin, let them, as they value their souls, make restitution according to their power. In the law of Moses the matter of restitution stood thus, *He shall recompence his trespass with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him*

against whom he hath trespassed*. But if any, whether servant or other, keep what they have stolen, they will be sure to keep God's curse along with it : for so it is said in the prophet Zechariah, *I will bring it forth, saith the Lord of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief; and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it, with the timber thereof, and the stones thereof* †.

2. Servants must be *industrious*. This is another branch of honesty in them. They may not be idle, consuming much, and working little. They are hired, and ought to labour. And, if they do not, their masters are as much defrauded as if they were actually robbed. If you are a slothful servant, I beseech you with what face can you ask your master to pay you your wages, when you know you have not earned them? And what is here said does as much affect such as are hired by the day as any other servants.

3. Also servants must be *thrifty*, taking care of their masters' interests as they would do of their own: they must content themselves with such necessary things as are allowed, and not think *it is all their own, as we say*; they must not carelessly waste and destroy any thing, because not they, but their masters, must provide more; they must not take the liberty of giving away what is not permitted; nor, as the manner of some is, make spoil of what is their master's in riotous entertainments among their companions. Any thing of this is dishonest, and shews a servant has not

* Numb. v. 7.

† Zech. iii. 4.

either much conscience toward God or regard for his master.

So you see the honesty and faithfulness of servants is of pretty large extent. It greatly demands their consideration, both on account of their duty towards God, and their own interest in the world, which has the nearest relation with their integrity and faithfulness.—I said, in the

Fifth and last place, that it was the duty of servants to pray for their masters, and for the success of their masters' business in their hands. This, at least to the servants themselves, may be a good proof of the conscience they make of their calling, and of the care they have to glorify God in it. You may see* a very devout prayer to this purpose made by Abraham's servant, when he was sent upon an important business by his master. And I suppose you will hardly think that when the Lord made whatever Joseph did to prosper in his hands, and blessed his master the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake, that both the one and the other were not commended to God by him in daily prayer. Indeed it cannot be well seen how they can be Christian servants, who in a confidence of their own strength and sufficiency, and not calling on the Lord for help, are going on with the whole work of their calling. Now then you have found much cause of condemnation from one and another of those duties which I have been laying before you. You have not, as you ought, had an eye to God in your service;

* Gen. xxi. v. 12.

you have failed prodigiously of inward and outward reverence; you have been sadly self-willed and impatient; nay, you have not been so honest as you ought, at least in the articles of diligence and thriftiness. But have you not to add to all these that your calling has not been sanctified as it should have been by diligent daily prayer? And may not this have been the main cause also that you have so greatly failed in those other duties of your calling? Yes verily: and I will add further, that you ought to charge it to your neglect herein that you have met with all those crosses and disappointments you are ready to complain of: for I know not that there is a promise made in Scripture of any blessing that is not prayed for.

On the whole, you cannot but see how content and happy the practice of your duty in the instances mentioned would render you in your calling, though in some respects service may seem to you clogged with peculiar inconveniences. It is the calling God has placed you in; and let that satisfy you. Let it be your care to do your duty in it as becomes the servant of the Lord; and in the end, if you are faithful, God will not forget you in Jesus Christ.

S E R M O N X X X V I .

GALATIANS iii. 24.

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

I TREATED last of the duty of servants toward their masters ; and am now to speak on the other side of the duties of masters. Servants, it was shewn, must serve God in their calling, so must their masters also ; servants must reverence their masters, because God hath put his authority upon them, and masters must therefore use that authority in such manner as that God may be glorified by it ; servants must be obedient to their masters' orders, therefore masters must be mild and reasonable in them ; servants must be faithful, and masters must be kind ; servants must pray for their masters, and masters in their turn must watch over their servants' souls. It is impossible not to remark, in the consideration of those relative duties which the law requires of us, how exactly suited to promote the happiness and well-being of society our religion is ; seeing it interposes a divine authority to restrain the violence of our corrupted hearts, and lays us under a curse for our failures in duty one toward

another, just as it does for our sins committed immediately against God himself. Servants must act their parts becomingly to their masters, and they again to them, under divine penalties; nor shall transgressions of this kind, any more than those directly against God, be blotted out and pardoned, but through the blood of Christ humbly and penitently applied unto. To say the whole, there is such an intimate relation between God's glory and our happiness, as that the one may not be severed from the other: and in instances of the very lowest kind, where the glory of God demands obedience from us, we shall find that obedience producing the happiest effects even upon our present ease and quiet. Particularly in that family, where the fear of the Lord influences all the members to a religious discharge of the duties of their several stations in it, there will be found a most desirable and delightful peace.

But to come to the duties of masters. I observe, by way of introduction, that it is the part of a religious master, with good advice, to make choice of the servants he takes into his family. *He that walketh in a perfect way, saith David, he shall serve me. He that worketh deceit shall not dwell in my house. He that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight* *. David would have none but religious persons for his servants; no proud, lying, swearing, ungodly persons, should harbour under his roof. And with good reason: for how could he think they would serve him well, who served God so ill? He would not bring a leprosy within his

* Psalm ci. 6, 7.

walls, to infect his children, and the other servants; nor venture to take the curse of God into his house, together with the wicked servant he admits into it. This is the foundation; there must be a good choice made of servants; and the master must look to it that he hire none for servants whose conduct shews they do not fear God. If we have failed here we have set out wrong; and I dare say shall be found to have done very little of that duty God requires at our hands as masters of families. What that duty is I come now to explain under the particulars above mentioned. And,

First.—It is the duty of masters to serve God in that calling. And a very important calling it is, that of a master of a family. For the whole world is but a collection of families, under the direction of their respective heads: and as these are nurseries of religion, or vice, so in general must the world be. There cannot therefore be any private trust of such moment as that of a family-governor; as also the account to be rendered up of it must be of the last importance to our souls. Upon the faithfulness or remissness of the master the state of the family will unavoidably turn; be orderly and exemplary on the one hand, or a harbour of licentiousness, riot, and wickedness, on the other: wherefore when God distributed the world of men into rich and poor, superiors and inferiors, it was not but upon a wise design for the better ordering his government among us. He has not admitted that we should be all equal, that there might not be an universal confusion: but by leaving the most in a state of necessity, he has put the many into the hands

of the few; and has strictly enjoined these few to look well to the charge he hath committed to them. The most natural and immediate relation that is caused by this inequality is that of masters and servants; and therefore, according to God's general design in this unequal distribution of circumstances, it is easy to see how much rests on the head of a family-governor, and how much it behoves him to serve God in that particular and important calling. It is a question therefore of great moment to all masters, whether they have been serving God or themselves in that relation. If there hath been no consideration of the trust committed to masters, nor view to serve God in that station, the charge is heavy, and the guilt great, as the consequences must have been very hurtful to the interests of God in the world. But to come nearer to the present subject,

Secondly.—It is the duty of masters to use that authority God hath given them over their servants to his glory. The master must be truly sensible of God's design in putting authority over servants into his hands; that it is not for the master's sake, but God's; not that the master might take his ease, and be attended as though the lower sort of people were made for that purpose, but that, by a righteous use of the authority received, the honour of God might be maintained in the family. Hence, in all respects in which the master's conduct and government may have any tendency to promote the honour of God, by the influence the one and the other must have on the servant's, it is his duty so to behave and govern. These

therefore should be leading inquiries with a master of a family.

First.—What influence will my own conduct have upon my servants? Do they see in me every thing that would recommend religion to them? that I honour it, that I believe it, that I practise it, that I make no account of wealth and honour in comparison with it, that I really sacrifice every thing to it? Have all that were ever servants in my house seen this in me? And have they never any of them seen in my conduct any thing which had a tendency to lessen their regard for God, or to harden them in sin? Did they ever see me, in any instance, an example of drunkenness, swearing, sabbath-breaking, covetousness, or whatever else was contrary to the conduct of a Christian? Or have they ever found me countenancing any of these sinful practices in others within my walls? Masters, as far as you have failed in these points, you have not used your authority to the glory of God.

The *second* leading question is this, Is my government in the family such as might best serve to promote religion among my servants? Particularly, have they seen this to be my great aim in all my family-discipline? and that the worship of God, and the maintenance of all good order, have been prevailing objects of my attention? that I would admit no manner of vice; and that my servants must either reform or leave me?—And,

Thirdly.—Am I able to say I have used all the influence my station has given me with my servants to

lead them into and encourage them in the ways of Christian godliness? Have I obliged them, as far as I might, to a religious observance of the sabbath at church and at home; both providing they might as much as possible attend the former, and not allowing them to idle about from the latter, on that day? Have I been at any pains to instruct them; and given them convenient opportunities for private prayer? Have I encouraged them in doing well, and reprovèd them for doing ill; in all careful not to give up my authority by an unpardonable remissness and want of resolution? Most especially have my orders at no time been contrary to any of these things; such as brought them under a necessity, if they would avoid my displeasure, to lie, deceive, cheat, break the sabbath?—Such as these are very interesting inquiries; and which will easily help masters and mistresses of families to discover how far short they have come of using their authority over their servants to the glory of God in their servants' spiritual profit.

Thirdly.—It is the duty of masters to be mild in their carriage, and reasonable in their commands. *Ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening, knowing that your Master is in heaven: neither is there respect of persons with him* *. Masters must not be tyrants, nor servants treated like slaves. Masters must endeavour to make their servants' labour as easy to them as they can; not laying more on them than they can well do; not taking up every mistake and indiscretion to scold and rate them for; not hasty

* Ephes. vi. 9.

and apt to see every fault, nor provoking them to wrath by unseasonable warmth upon every cause. However it may seem, it is at least as difficult a matter to be a good master as a good servant; not less contrary to our hearts to command than to obey with a proper temper. Many masters and mistresses are indiscreet in their giving directions, so that servants know not what they have to do, and in what order of time; from hence many things will come upon their hands at once, some of which must needs be neglected or done amiss; and then the servant shall suffer blame for the master's imprudence. Nay, and some masters or mistresses will be indulging a temper of finding fault, and be continually watching occasions against servants to scold them, as if it were the property of good and notable masters and mistresses to make their servants' station constantly uneasy and uncomfortable to them. Others again carry it with too high a hand toward their servants, domineering over them as if they were brutes, insomuch that the servants tremble to be near them. And others shall be expecting from them what is beyond their parts and abilities and opportunities of improvement, which not considered, that shall often be treated as a crime which in truth was but the effect of pure ignorance. In all such cases, self-will breaking out, shews how difficult a thing it is to exercise Christian meekness and moderation toward those who are in subjection to us. Let only that word be remembered by masters, *Knowing that your Master also is in heaven: neither is there respect of persons with him*; and then how utterly inexcusable will their want of meekness and moderation

towards their servants appear even to themselves. *Your master is in heaven*, you have often provoked him, you are daily provoking him, yet he hath not dealt with you as you deserve, but is patient, gentle, forbearing towards you ; consider then that your servants are as dear to him as you can be, and say how you can answer for such a treatment of them as he does not exercise toward you, and your case would be miserable if he did. This is the force of the argument ; which you see is exactly fitted to shew the unhumbléd pride of their hearts, who, instead of shewing gentleness, mildness, and forbearance toward those, who must in a manner bear whatever treatment their masters and mistresses see fit, do behave toward them with severity, roughness, and cruelty,

Fourthly.—It is the duty of masters to be honest and kind towards their servants, which is but an equal return for their faithfulness and service to them. I say the service in point of honesty entitles to the wages, and steady exemplary faithfulness to somewhat more. But I will mention them both under the same head, because kindness seems to be but a sort of honesty towards a good servant. Masters must be honest towards their servants, paying them their wages, and that in due time. There are so many passages in Scripture on this head, as plainly to shew that, whatever may be the case now, yet there have been times when servants have been grievously oppressed this way. *Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your gar-*

ments are moth-eaten. *Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire: ye have heaped treasure together for the last days**. Why, what is the cause of all these dreadful declarations of wrath? It follows in the next verse: *Behold, the hire of the labourers, which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth*. Such another declaration I find in Malachi, *God will be a swift witness against them that oppress the hireling in his wages †*. And in Jeremiah, *Woe be to him that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work ‡*. Masters therefore must needs give unto their servants *that which is just and equal*. Now what is that? Their wages without dispute, and that in due season, and willingly, not causing their servants to sue for what they have honestly earned, as if they were claiming what they had no right to. But what besides wages? It is just and equal that servants have wholesome provisions, and such as is sufficient for them. It is just and equal also they have sufficient time for sleep, and some time for relaxation; and, as I said before, convenient space daily for private exercises of worship. But is this all? doth justice and equity require no more? at least, doth the duty and law of kindness demand no more? You shall judge for yourselves. I find

* James v. 1—4.

† Malachi iii. 5.

‡ Jer. xxii. 13.

the story in the Gospel, that a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick and ready to die. Hearing of Jesus, the centurion sends to him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant. You may see in the history how pressing they were upon the occasion; and that himself would have come, but he did not judge himself worthy; for it was that alone, and not want of love to his servant, that detained him at home. Yet observe, he was a man of no small consideration; he was very wealthy, and had built them a synagogue, and one that had many at his command. Now judge you: did this centurion well in taking this care for his sick servant? Doubtless you say he did. Why then you confess it is just and equal you should take what reasonable care is in your power of your servants, when they are in sickness. And what then shall we think of such masters as grudge their servants what they eat and drink at such seasons, and murmur that now they are nothing but a burden, and perhaps unmercifully stop their wages; and all through a miserable covetousness?—But is this all? Is nothing due to those who have been long and faithful servants to their masters, and are now worn out in their service? Indeed now-a-days it is but rarely there is any such thing. Servants are shifted and changed so often, that no affection grows on the one part or the other, which is a thing very unbecoming. But where lies the blame of it? Masters say in the servants, and servants say in the masters. I suppose they are both in the right, and that both are in fault; while on each

side the one has contributed to make the other worse. Nevertheless this is not always the case: there are those who grow old in the service of the same master: and what is due to them? Methinks they are grown into a kind of nearer relation than that of servants; and have a very fair title to their master's liberality, when they have painfully and faithfully worn out their strength in his service. It was ordered in the law, that at the seventh year, when servants were discharged, the master should not send his servant away empty, *Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy wine-press: of that wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him**. And this you will own is a worthy pattern for Christian masters to follow. But,

Fifthly and lastly.—It is the duty of masters to watch over their servants' souls. This is a principal duty of masters, however little it may be regarded. God says of Abraham, as a principal branch of that believer's character, *I know that he will command his household, that they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment †*. Like a good master he would use his authority over his servants to engage them in God's ways. But was this all? Would he not instruct them, think you, what these ways of the Lord were? And would he not carefully observe their behaviour, whether they were walking in these ways or not? And when at any time he saw them going

* Deut. xv. 14.

† Gen. xviii. 19.

out of these ways, would he not warn them of it, and, as need was, reprove and correct them for it, and take all the pains and care he could to bring them back again into the right way? Yes, you say; else he had shewn no zeal for God, nor true love for *his* servants. But now, masters, what was Abraham's practice, is not the same also your duty? But have you walked in the steps of faithful Abraham? Have you used all your authority over your servants to lead them into God's ways? But, moreover, have you instructed them as Abraham did in the ways of godliness? Why should you not? You are not greater nor richer than was Abraham. Or say you are, you cannot be too great to serve your Master which is in heaven. It was an old custom with masters and mistresses themselves to teach their servants the principles of the Christian religion, by hearing, and explaining to them, the Catechism at all convenient seasons; and then also to question them upon their return from church concerning what they had been doing and hearing there. This was acting like Abraham: but have you been at such pains with your servants? And have you also carefully observed their behaviour; warned them of what you saw amiss in it; and, as need was, reproved them sharply, shewing yourself more displeas'd at them for their sins than for every thing besides; and, in a word, used all the means you could to do them service in their most important interests? To do this is to act like a father of a family; and whoever hath laboured herein hath not repented, I am confident, of the pains he hath taken this way.

Thus now I have set before you the duty of masters. It remains only to sum up the inquiries as to your discharge of it. See, masters and mistresses, have you, as you ought, served God in your place and calling? Laying aside selfish and by-ends, have you always and in every case acted with this view, that you might glorify God in the use of that authority he hath put into your hands over your servants? Have you also at all times been mild and reasonable with them, not indulging your own will in the exercise of your power over them? And have you shewn them not only all manner of honesty, but of kindness, in dealing by them as was just and equal? Withal, have you watched carefully and as a father over their souls, instructing, reprovng, admonishing them? What master will say, All this have I done from my first hour of my being in that relation? What master will not rather say, In this duty I have been exceedingly deficient, negligent, and blameworthy? And if so, should not such a matter be laid to heart, the curse of the law be apprehended, and the blood of Christ, according to the design of the text, be applied to for cleansing from such guilt? If we were not guilty there would be no need of Christ; but since we are, we must either perish or come to him, crying, I have sinned, Lord, have mercy upon me.

Nor is this all. The law is a rule, as well a schoolmaster; and an humble endeavour through faith in Christ's blood, and by his Spirit, to conform to it as a rule, is our bounden Christian duty, and what will certainly be expected at our hands at the day of ac-

count. To as many masters therefore as are really walking according to this rule of their duty now laid before them, with a sense of their imperfection therein, real sorrow for that imperfection, and humble dependence on the righteousness of Christ for pardon thereof, I may truly say, Peace be unto them, for they are of the true Israel of God; and may exhort them to abound therein more and more, to the manifestation of God's glory, to the furtherance of the salvation of souls, and to the increase of their joy in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ.

S E R M O N X X X V I I .

GALATIANS iii. 24.

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

IN prosecuting the relative duties required by the fifth commandment, we have considered already the family-relations of parents and children, and of masters and servants; so we come now, in the

Third place, to speak to the relation subsisting between husbands and wives, and the duties of both. Two or three observations will pave a way to the clearer apprehension of this subject.

First.—Marriage is purely and wholly a divine institution. Though natural propensities must needs have led those of either sex to hold intercourse one with the other; yet it was only the appointment of God which could beget that special relation between a man and woman, by which their persons, circumstances, and interests, are mutually regarded as one. So we find, though God made Adam and Eve, yet, by a distinct and particular act afterwards, he joined them together in marriage. *He brought her unto the*

man; that is, to be his wife. And Adam said, *This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.*

Secondly.—The design of this institution was God's glory, in the preserving the chastity of our minds in the procreation of children; and in such a religious dwelling together of the parties as might best tend to the pious education of those children, as well as to the great comfort and also spiritual profiting of the parties themselves, together with the influence they should now have on others as a family.

Thirdly.—That in order to these ends God has bound up the parties respectively by his own express authority; giving such commands to both and to each as have the plainest tendency to effect them. Thus seeing one end of marriage is the preservation of chastity in the procreation of children, he hath guarded the marriage-bed by the most direct prohibitions. And seeing the other end of it is family-government, by which the pious education of children is provided for, he hath put authority upon the man over the woman; yet so restrained by the obligations of love and tenderness, that while there should be submission on the one side, there should be no tyranny on the other. Government supposes inferiority; and the pre-eminence in the matrimonial union is apparent from the very order and manner of their creation, as St. Paul observes, 1 Tim. ii. 13. where the apostle sufficiently intimates with which of the two the authority should remain.

Fourthly.—It can only be in a religious regard to these ends, which infinite Wisdom had in view in the

institution of marriage, that God can be glorified by persons in this relation. This is the plain consequence of what had been advanced. For if marriage be simply and only an institution of God for the preservation of chastity, and for the blessings of family-government to the parties themselves and to their children; and if such ends cannot be effected but by the observance of such rules as God has given in the case on the one part and the other; then the transgression of these rules must be the subversion of God's design, and sinning against his institution. Wherefore,

Fifthly.—The inquiry is, What are these rules which God hath prescribed to persons in the state of matrimony, for the preservation of chastity, and for the maintenance and furtherance of his glory in the good order of family-government, by which the children are religiously educated? My answer is this. You have a comprehensive view of matrimonial duties, in that which is signified and represented by a state of marriage; namely, the spiritual marriage and unity that there is betwixt Christ and his Church, And here,

First.—Of the duties common to both husband and wife. Betwixt Christ and the Church there is union and communion. *This is a great mystery**, saith the Apostle; the union between Christ and believers, who are so strictly united together as to be one. *We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones †.*

* Ephes. iv. 32.

† v. 30.

And out of this union of course springs communion. Christ's things are the believer's things, and the believer is Christ's, to hold, use, and enjoy at his will. But though there be a great mystery in the spiritual union and communion betwixt Christ and the Church, the figure which represents it, marriage, is plain enough. By God's institution the man and woman in marriage are made one; as one they must regard themselves. The man is the woman's; and the woman is the man's. The man is the woman's in such manner, as to let no other have a part in him as a husband; and so the woman is the man's in such sort, as to belong wholly to the man in quality of a wife. Consequently, by the act of marriage there is a surrender made of the person mutually by the one to the other. And out of this grows communion; whatever is the woman's becomes the man's, and what is the man's becomes the woman's, jointly to use and enjoy. Wherefore,

First.—It is the duty of married persons to regard each other as one: for Christ and the Church are one; and the husband and the wife are one. They must regard themselves as parts one of another. And this regard must be very tender and affectionate. *A man shall leave his father and mother, and be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh* *. They must regard each other as one flesh. But do they so when they are *selfish*, making as it were separate interests, and each so caring for self as to have little

* Ephes. v. 31.

care for the other? Do they regard each other as one flesh when they fall to sinful *contentions and brawlings*, the man tyrannically using his superiority in violence and bitterness, and the woman making up her want of strength by anger and fury, to the destruction of family-peace, to the very great hurt and hinderance of their children, and to the wounding their own souls by the violation of matrimonial obligations? Do they regard each other as one flesh, when they have *no liking to each other's company*, when home is worse than a prison to the husband, and the wife is never easy but when he is out of her way?

Secondly.—If man and wife are one, as Christ and the Church are one, they must not only regard each other as one, but also endeavour to promote the present and eternal happiness of each other to their power. They must labour to please one another, and make their lives mutually comfortable; yea, and especially to work for the spiritual profiting one of the other. It is an ill token of their regarding each other as one flesh, when they do not study to please and be agreeable the one to the other, but are continually thwarting, as if they came together to be a mutual vexation. It is a much worse token, when instead of helping they are an hinderance to each other's souls; seldom or ever a serious word passing between them, never warning each other against whatever sinful tempers or practices any further than their own respective ease or humours are crossed by them, and leading such careless and ungodly lives as mightily tend to quench any little measures of seriousness

there might be in either of them, and to harden one the other into a total forgetfulness of God.

Thirdly.—If man and wife are one, they must especially help to bear each other's burdens. It was a sad part in Job's wife, when God's hand was against him, to be against him too. She of all his family was left to comfort him, but she proved a poor comforter; instead of supporting him, she comes with her peevish council, *Curse God, and die*: when all was gone already but God's favour, she would needs he should wilfully throw away that too. Desperate counsels and angry reproaches are, I fear, the too-frequent consolations ministered from one to the other in the calamities attending a married state. Elkanah's conduct to his wife Hannah in their common affliction is an excellent pattern of matrimonial tenderness: *Hannah, why weepest thou? And why eatest thou not? And why is thy heart grieved? Am not I better unto thee than ten sons*?*

Fourthly.—If husband and wife are one, they must exercise much patience and forbearance one with the other. It is an unnatural thing for a man to be angry with his own flesh. And what good can come of it if he is so? Yet in this state there is much occasion for patience: for infirmities and sins there will be in both, cross accidents in the family of greater or less importance, loss and disappointment in worldly business, with many other things which will be apt to stir up the heart of the one against the other, and to breed

* 1 Sam. i. 8.

uneasiness. Nevertheless they two are but one flesh, and should not tear and devour one the other ; laying the fault each upon the other, as they commonly do when any thing goes amiss. This is all contrary to matrimonial union, by which the parties are joined together as they are ; not two angels met together in the matrimonial state, but a son and a daughter of sinful Adam, from both of whom must be expected infirmities, frailties, imperfections, passions, and provocations.

And, *lastly*, If man and wife be one, even as Christ and the Church are, then they must be faithful the one to the other. They must be faithful to the marriage-bed. It is a capital sin against the institution of marriage, that either party should in any wise separate from the matrimonial vows and obligations in this respect ; and, however the world thinks of it, it is as great a crime in the man as the woman ; a crime which, however it may be artfully concealed from the eyes of men, yet it is noted by the eye of God, who hath declared, that *Whoremongers and adulterers he will judge* in the last day.—They must be faithful in respect of family-concerns, neither the husband idle and unthrifty, nor the wife prodigal and slothful ; but having regard to their common happiness and welfare as being alike interested. Nay, they must be faithful to each other's secrets. There should be much freedom of heart between them ; as they are one, they will be likely to keep little to themselves, and what they intrust one to the other should be kept with a becoming prudence and secrecy.

The duties I have now been reckoning under this first head, as they evidently rise from the matrimonial union, so do they regard both the husband and wife. I come now,

Secondly.—To speak of those that are special to each of them. And these I think are very discernibly plain, on the one part and the other, from the conduct of Christ and the Church, one towards the other, which is represented by the state of marriage. Whatever is the temper and conduct of Christ to the Church, such is the duty of the husband toward the wife; as, on the other side, the duty of the Church to Christ marks out the duty of wives towards their husbands. Now the temper wherewith Christ governs the Church is love, using his dominion for God's glory with all gentleness. And what of his conduct comes within the present representation seems to fall under the three heads of direction, provision, and forbearance. Christ uses his authority for the glory of God in directing, providing for, and bearing with the Church. And so the Church's duty, on the other part, is with affectionate submission to obey Christ's direction, to improve his provision, and to be thankfully sensible of his forbearance. So we have here before us the special duties of husbands and wives; namely,

First.—Husbands must love their wives, and wives must reverence their husbands.

Secondly.—Husbands must direct, and wives must obey them.

Thirdly.—Husbands must provide, and wives must prudently manage that provision.

Fourthly.—Husbands must bear with their wives, and they in return must lovingly help them.

The *first* of these special duties is, husbands must love their wives, and wives must reverence their husbands.—Husbands must love their wives. This is the temper of Christ toward the Church his spouse. He doth not exercise his authority but for the glory of God and for her welfare. And accordingly this is the pattern set out to husbands to walk by. *Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church *.* And again, *Love your wives, and be not bitter against them †.* Do not use your authority to exalt yourself, but to the glory of God; nor be a tyrant instead of a husband. This would be a strange abuse of God's design in putting authority into your hand. Yet it is such an abuse as the heart of man is directly liable to; which is ever ready to forget the design of God in the use of the things received from him, and to turn them all to licentiousness. Perhaps in few cases is this more frequent than in that before us. Husbands will have their will, because they will; without any regard to God, or respect to his gracious purpose in the appointment of family-government: as if power were given them to gratify their pride, and others were ordained of God to be their slaves. Such a temper is intolerable even towards the meanest servant; but how much more so toward the wife of a man's bosom? Why, you churlish Nabals, when you married your wives, did you or they mean and con-

* Ephes. v. 25.

† Coloss. iii. 19.

tract that they were to be indeed slaves to you ; that they were to tremble at every look of you, never to hear a kind word from you, and to be dealt with as those over whom you were licensed to rule with a rod of iron ? They cannot easily help themselves, it is true, but must bear all your ill treatment : nevertheless, God will help them ; he will certainly reward on your heads so horrid an abuse of that authority he has put into your hands. All you, therefore, that are husbands, or have been so, consider with what temper you have conducted yourselves in that relation ? Have you not more or less behaved rashly, and roughly, and unkindly ? Have you loved your wives ? always loved them ? never been bitter against them ? But more, have you held and used your authority for God's glory, and the good of those in subjection to you ? The question is not simply, have you been kind to your wives ? but have you exercised your authority with kindness as Christ doth his ? A mere fond kindness, growing out of constitution or animal affection, a kindness for quietness-sake, will not answer God's demands. The point is, whether you have endeavoured to preserve and execute the authority God put into your hand ? and whether you did it with love ? As Christ does not lay aside his government over the church, but uses it in all gentleness and tenderness of affection.

On the other side, the temper of wives toward their husbands must be reverence. *Let the wife see that she reverence her husband* *. Wives must consider

* Ephes. v. 33.

God's authority in the person of their husbands as the proper ground of a religious reverence. It will stand upon nothing else but this. For if the reverence of the wife to her husband do rest on his station, or sense, or knowledge, or piety; take all these away, and she will have no reverence for him at all. She must reverence him as her husband, for that consideration solely, because he is her husband; that is, because God hath put authority upon the husband in regard of his wife, and she by her own consent in matrimony hath put herself into this relation. However, therefore, matters prove after marriage, she must bear reverently upon her heart the sense of her being in subjection to that man as a husband; and that reverential sense of his authority must be shewn in all her conduct toward him. If therefore at any time she despises him in her heart, because of any supposed or real weakness, infirmity or sin, as did Michal, Saul's daughter, respecting her husband David, when in her judgment he made himself a fool by dancing before the ark*, she sins. Nay, you say, but he is indiscreet; rash; or perhaps you will say, he abuses his authority, and treats me unkindly: this, and a great deal more, may be true; he may be poor withal, and despised in the eyes of the world: yet the answer still returns, he is your husband, and in that capacity bears God's authority toward you; upon which account your reverence is due to him, and is not suspended upon other accidental circumstances. When

* 2 Sam. vi. 16.

therefore you have behaved irreverently towards your husband in thought, word, or deed, upon any, whether imaginary or real provocation, you have sinned against God's authority. But now is this reverence consistent with those sullen peevishnesses, furious countenances, angry speeches uttered with vehement indignation and clamorous voice, that are too often found in the conduct of wives? Surely here is not the least footstep of reverence. If ever there was any, it is all swallowed up by that pride of self-will, which insists on equality at least, if not pre-eminence. Cast up now your accounts on your parts, and see if there be no charge against you on the score of irreverence toward your husbands. Possibly you have seen them deficient in the duty of love; examine now if they have not, yea, rather, if God hath not, seen you defective on your part in the duty of reverence: for that husbands love their wives, and wives reverence their husbands, is the express command of God, for the transgression of which both the one and the other must be answerable.

I conclude for the morning with this observation of the Psalmist, exemplified in the case now under consideration, *by thy commandments I get understanding*. So we easily may, as of the strictness and holiness of the law, so of the sinfulness of our depraved nature. Nor let us quarrel with the law for its purity and holiness. We cannot but approve it, though it condemns us so much, and though we find ourselves so utterly incapable of answering its demands. To what a blessed condition shall we be

arrived when all that the law requires shall be found perfectly wrought into our hearts! that will not be yet. We must wait for another world for that perfection. But in the mean time let us thankfully receive that pardon, and diligently improve that grace, both which are purchased for us and offered to us by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Secondly.—The next special duty is this, as it is the office of Christ to direct the Church, and the duty of the Church to obey his directions; so it is the office of the husband to order and dispose in the government of the family, and the duty of the wife to submit to such directions.—It is the duty of the husband to order in the government of the family. And it behoves him to do it with much advisedness; not consulting his own will, but God's glory, in that little society over which God has placed him. I say he must have in his eye God's glory, and be guided thereby in the whole discipline of the house, that the spiritual and temporal benefit thereof may be promoted. This I have mentioned already in a former discourse, and repeat here with a view of shewing the true nature of the husband's authority over the wife in point of orders. It is true the husband's will is the wife's rule of duty, so far as there is no interfering with the law of God. But then also the law of God must be the husband's rule, from which if at any time he step aside in his injunctions, the wife not only may, but must refuse compliance in the spirit of meekness. God has laid it on the husband to govern; and at his hand God will require it, if he have made

his own wilful humour, and not the glory of God and the benefit of the family, the measure by which he hath been guided. Indeed his charge here is very interesting; and he shall need sue with much impurity to the throne of grace, that his own will may be mortified; and that he may be directed himself to dispose all things within his house in the manner that shall best conduce to God's glory. In which good work, also, it is the duty of the wife to assist him by her prayers and counsels: but by no means to step into his place, and take the direction out of his hand. She is a subject in the family; and her duty is to be foremost in submitting to the directions given by the head of it; which also it is her business to observe, with a submission proportionable to the importance of them, in the judgment of her husband. Yea, and even in lesser things, which seem not of much moment, her compliance will be both most satisfactory to her own mind, and most conducive to establish the governor's authority over children and servants. This latter consideration ought to have much weight with the wife; she should labour to establish and strengthen the husband's authority; the readiest way of doing which is by the strictness of her conformity to his directions; with which if she be found to take liberty, the inferiors will be very ready to do the same.

This in short is the duty of husbands and wives respecting government and submission; upon which every one knows the Scriptures lay much stress. *Ye husbands, dwell with your wives according to know-*

*ledge**. Now this is the very thing I have been speaking of ; husbands must exercise their Christian authority with all wisdom. *Ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands † ; and submit yourselves to them as it is fit in the Lord ‡*. Let conscience therefore say whether this hath been wrought on the one part and the other. Hath the husband never been licentious in command, the wife lawless in submission ; both misguided by their own will ? Hath the latter at no time made compliance with sinful orders, to please or pacify her husband ; nor the former given up his authority, and let things go as they will, to please his wife ? In short, has the one always acted like a kind Abraham, the other like a submissive Sarah, in the matter of family dispensation ?

Thirdly.—Husbands must provide, and wives must manage that provision with thriftiness and care. This regards their respective duties in the maintenance of the family. The care of getting lies on the husband. He must not be idle, but labour for the support of those who are his, in a decent manner, becoming their and his station. It is an ill husband that takes no pains about such a provision ; cares not what becomes of the wife and family at home, so he may have wherewith to indulge his lusts abroad in rioting, drunkenness, and pleasure ; never takes up a thought how his children and wife shall be supported when he is dead, but is an idle squanderer of what he has and what he

* 1 Pet. iii. 7. † iii. 1. ‡ Coloss. iii. 13.

gets. This is an ill, a cruel, an unnatural husband; *he is worse than an infidel**; the Scripture plainly tells him in so many words. Yet how common a character is this! such husbands are to be found in every part. They marry to gratify their carnal inclinations; which done, they have evidently no concern about their families, nor love for their wives, would gladly leave them to the wide world were it not through fear or shame (indeed many such ungodly spendthrifts do this, to the great burden of others), and are very content to see them starving, while themselves can riot with their drunken abominable companions. It is not easy to conceive a more brutal character than this. Yet how common! What! among the lower sort only? Truly no. There are those of higher station, who consume their substance in idle riotous living, neglect all their concerns, mind nothing but gaming, or company-keeping, or pleasure, and reduce their families to beggary by their own sinful extravagance. Let the wife be what she will, all must come to ruin in such circumstances. And I have always thought such wives the first among all the objects of compassion; especially because their condition, though bad enough, is made worse by the unkind and brutal treatment which their husbands too commonly add to all the misery they have brought them to by their idleness and extravagance. It is the husband's duty therefore to make provision for the family; and then it is also the wife's to manage it in the house

* 1. Tim. v. 8.

with care and decency. The wife must not squander what the husband earns; must not, through a vain affectation of making a figure, spend more in the family than he can prudently afford; must not always be calling, *Give, give*, but must manage and order according to his abilities. There is much mischief of this kind done also by the heedlessness and other evil qualities of wives. They have not many times a due regard to their place and calling, which is to look after the house; are idle, are too proud to submit to such employment, have an eye to nothing, and let all go as it will, *do not keep at home* *, as the Apostle advises, but behave so unprofitably in their calling, that, let the husband provide what he can, all shall not be sufficient. His gains are like sand thrown into a sieve, all goes through.—Whether husbands and wives have not somewhat to answer for on this head, I leave themselves to determine; while I just observe there is another extreme, when the husband will not afford what is sufficient, or the wife will not use it, through distrust of God's providence and desire of vain glory.

Fourthly, and lastly.—It is the duty of husbands to bear with their wives, and of the wife to help them with all loving affection. The Apostle calls the wife *the weaker vessel* †, and, as such, enjoins that *honour should be given her*. Christ bears with the Church, and so must the husband do with the wife. Forbearance is the duty of the head; the office of the inferior is submission. Now as Christ manifestly sees in-

* Titus ii. 5.

† 1 Pet. iii. 7.

numerable faults, blemishes, and miscarriages in the Church, yet doth not for that come to hasty terms with his spouse, but, affectionately loving her, doth wait upon her with meekness, and is continually doing her good; so herein is an example for husbands, though they see many defects in their wives; they must be gentle toward them, and, if they have more knowledge, must use all kind and gracious methods to do them service, and to bring them off from any wrong courses. Nothing can vindicate the husband in using any violence toward his wife; it is as if a man should tear and rend his own flesh. *He must nourish and cherish her, as Christ does the Church* *. He must consider his own sins, and see how God bears with him; and hereby he must be wrought up to such a kindness and sweetness of temper and conduct, as is most likely to effect the reformation of whatever is amiss in his wife. This duty requires, as much as it forbids that roughness, wherewith many husbands are wont to come upon their wives for every indiscretion. Mean time, the wife must not take advantage of the husband's gentleness to grow upon him, but must study to reform whatever contrary to God's word he disapproves, that she may keep and increase the love of his heart toward her; than which nothing should be more the object of her concern and care. Love in matrimony is a tender thing, jealous, and such as will wear out if it be not continually fed by kind endeavours on each part. So that both must look to it,

* Ephes. v. 29.

that they do not lose the heart one of the other, than which nothing should be more deeply dreaded ; because, if this once be the case, nothing but vexation may be expected, and it will be no easy thing to regain the lost affection. So that wives must not presume on their husbands' kindness, but study to please and be agreeable to them, by conforming to their lawful inclinations, helping them in their cares, and partaking with them in their griefs. Such kindness in the man and amiableness in the woman will mightily knit their hearts together, and abundantly contribute to their helpfulness one to the other in all concerns spiritual and temporal. To the enlargement of which matrimonial love, it will behove them especially to pray with and for each other : for it is God's blessing alone that can make them comfortable partners, their affairs prosperous, and above all their souls to thrive in this matrimonial estate, in such manner that, by their godly living together in this world, in the world to come they may have life everlasting.

I have reckoned up now the principal duties of the married state ; by which I doubt not there hath been found much miscarriage one way and another in those that are or have been engaged in it. This indeed is the less to be wondered at, because of the undue motives upon which matrimony is usually undertaken. If there be no eye to the glory of God in the choice of the person ; or if that aim be but a secondary one, taken in by the way, whilst interest or inclination are allowed to have the first place ; if the approaches toward this state be not sanctified by prayer, the good

husband and wife sought out from the Lord; if the duties of the married state and its difficulties be not considered beforehand, and the heart prepared for them by grace; if there has not been also a prudential regard to tempers and circumstances: if all these needful steps have been neglected, and people rush into matrimony unadvisedly, lightly, and wantonly, to satisfy *their carnal lusts and appetites, like brute beasts that have no understanding*; I beseech you, can it be any wonder that they ill perform the duties of the matrimonial relation, and that such state proves uncomfortable to them, and full of disappointment in respect of what they hoped for in it? Wherefore, as ever we would expect God's blessing on that state, we must enter upon it in a religious and godly manner: grace must direct us principally in our choice, nor must we corrupt the minds of those we purpose to marry by fulsome flattery and vain expectations. *A prudent wife, saith Solomon, is from the Lord**, and at his hands she must be obtained.

Put the whole now together, and see if you are not guilty respecting the matrimonial duties now laid before you. And if you are, (as who in this relation is not?) you will easily see how the number of your sins increases upon you. *Who can tell his iniquities?* you may well say. It will be well if your desires after Christ, and value for his salvation, increase with the discovery made of your sins; else my labour and your attention shall be in vain. You do not attain

* Prov. xix. 14.

the end of the law mentioned in the text, and are not schooled home to Christ. But if the law have already wrought this effect upon you, and you have taken shelter under the Redeemer's wings, then your conformity to what has this day been set before you, though it be abundantly imperfect, will graciously prove that you have not believed in vain. In such case be thankful, and labour to go on unto perfection, for the glory of God, and your own greater reward.

S E R M O N X X X V I I I .

GALATIANS iii. 24.

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

AS the law of God can be the only rule of our conduct, so departure from it must needs bring us under his displeasure; and the sense of the one and the other ought to engage us seriously and penitently to seek for mercy in the way God offers it to us. This is the use we are bid by the text to make of the law; and I supposed that a more distinct explanation of the law, in its several commands and prohibitions, might serve by the blessing of God to this desirable end. In these views I have already submitted to your inquiry an explanation of those parts of the law which relate immediately to God. And, in pursuit of the same design, I am now treating of those duties which God requires from us one toward another; which are either relative, arising from particular circumstances in which we are placed, provided for by the fifth commandment; or general, and such as we owe to all men, concerning which the will of God is declared in the five last commandments.

It must be observed that all the commandments stand upon the same footing of divine authority, and to break one of them is as much an insult offered to God's government as to break another. Indeed, respecting temporal effects, there is a difference in the transgression of one commandment and another, according to the differing nature of each commandment. Thus we variously injure others by breaking the commandments against murder, adultery, theft, and false witness: but in either of these sins we alike disregard the authority of God. You see therefore it is as great a sin against God to break the fifth commandment as the sixth or the eighth. Yet it is not so accounted; we make no great matter of disregarding those relative duties required by the fifth commandment, when we should greatly condemn ourselves were we guilty of theft or adultery; while nevertheless the honour of God, and indeed the welfare of our neighbour, are as much affected by one as the other.

I have explained already the relations which are domestic, those between parents and children, masters and servants, husbands and wives. We now step abroad, and consider those which are more general, namely, of ministers and people, magistrates and subjects. Wherefore the

Fourth relation provided for by this fifth commandment, and which comes now to be spoken to, is that which subsists between ministers and people.

It will be needful, in order to our better understanding the nature and obligations of this relation, to observe that a ministry is God's appointment for his

glory in the edification of the Church, by dispensing to it the word and sacraments. This is plain from the commission given by Christ to his disciples, *Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen* *. Here the commission, and the end of it, are both evident; as also the promise of Christ's presence and power to attend the ministry. Now, therefore, with what temper and conduct must they, who are thus solemnly charged and commissioned, minister the Gospel? The answer to this will discover the duty of ministers. And how must they be received and treated by those to whom they are sent? The answer to this will shew the duty of the people. Concerning both nothing can be plainer, than that it is the business of those, who are thus commissioned, to promote the interests of Christ by all the means in their power; as it is also that they to whom they are sent ought to receive them in such manner as shall testify their regard for him whose messengers they are, and most effectually answer the gracious design of their office. And therefore I suppose that which is most material to be said upon this relation of ministers and people, will fall within the compass of these four points.

First.—Ministers must account themselves servants

* Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

of Christ; and people must reverence them as bearing that character.

Secondly.—Ministers must diligently dispense the word; and people must meekly receive it at their mouths.

Thirdly.—Ministers must give themselves up to their work; and people must communicate unto them in all good things.

Fourthly.—Ministers must be an example of what they teach; and people must follow their example as far as they are so. To these special duties on the one part and the other must be added,

Fifthly.—As common to both, that they must pray for one another.

First.—Ministers must account themselves servants of Christ; and their people must reverence them as bearing that character.—Ministers must account themselves servants of Christ. To serve Christ in the Gospel is the very end of their office. Christ did not appoint them that they should serve their own lusts by their calling; but simply that they should serve the interests of his kingdom in raising up and edifying his Church. This is the very design of their institution; and in this view they are variously called *ambassadors for Christ**, *stewards of the mysteries of God* †, *labourers in the Lord's harvest* ‡, *watchmen over the house of Israel* ‡, as well as by other titles, which sufficiently declare the nature, importance,

* 2 Cor. v. 20.

† 1 Cor. iv. 1.

‡ Matt. ix. 20.

§ Ezek. iii. 17.

and divine appointment of their office. They must therefore account themselves men set apart to the service of Christ in the Church. This must be their great aim; and this they must regard as their great business; otherwise they pervert their institution, will infallibly betray their Master's interest, and suffer the wolf to scatter and devour his sheep. They must be sensible of the prodigious trust committed to them; how the honour of God, and the salvation or destruction of immortal souls, are most intimately connected with their faithfulness or negligence. Their great inquiries should be, "Have I the temper of an ambassador for Christ, my heart abounding with zeal for the honour and interests of his kingdom, and big with the most affectionate longing after the souls committed to my care, to bring them home to Christ, and to feed them and nourish them in his pastures? Am I ready to sacrifice my all for his and their interest? Have I no by-ends; neither seeking in the pride of my heart to lord it over God's heritage, nor in the covetousness of my heart to promote my own filthy lucre? Is God my witness, and will the judgment-day make it publicly appear to the assembled world, that I am not led by worldly views in my office; and that I mean this one thing (dearer to me than my life, and which is the principle of my whole conduct), the interests of Jesus and the salvation of souls? And was this always my aim and view? Did it engage me to enter into the office; and has it steadily followed me in it from that day until now? At that time had

“ I no undue eye to the honours or interests of the world? And since that time have I never been warped to a conformity with the world, by a desire of obtaining its wealth, or of preserving its esteem and favour?” These are great inquiries, which enter into the very soul of the ministerial office. Happy should I be could I answer them as St. Paul did, *I know nothing by myself**. Such is the account ministers must make of themselves.—And what account must their people make of them? They must account of them as *the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God* †; in which character they must bear a reverence towards them upon their heart. Hear what the Scripture saith: *We beseech you, brethren, to know them who labour among you, and are over you in the Lord; and esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake* ‡. You see, the minister must be esteemed in love for the sake of his office: for it is that, and not his abilities, which puts honour upon him. He must be esteemed for his work’s sake, because he is the servant of Christ to minister the Gospel. If he be honoured because of his learning, yea, even because of his goodness, these (though otherwise proper grounds of reverence) are not the mark; he must be revered because he is Christ’s servant. *Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine* §. Speaking of Epa-

* 1 Cor. iv. 4.

† iv. 1.

‡ 1 Thess. v. 12, 13.

§ 1 Tim. v. 17.

phroditus, the Apostle says to the Philippians, *Receive him in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such in reputation: because for the work's sake he was nigh unto death* *. A messenger of Christ is one in an honourable station, and must be received with a degree of reverence proportionable to the dignity and majesty of him whose servant he is. Accordingly Christ saith, *He that despiseth you despiseth me* †. So it must needs be; because to despise the messenger proves a disregard of him that sent him. You see therefore that reverence is due to the ministers of Christ, that they must be considered in that character, and for that reason must be esteemed. I say they must be revered for their work's sake, because they represent Christ's person, (what a gravity and dignity should that impress upon their own hearts and conduct!) because they bring his message, and minister his ordinances. It is herein lies the ground of the reverence due to them; not the man, however qualified, but the servant of Christ must be respected; the Master must be honoured in the servant. *I magnify mine office* ‡, saith St. Paul. His office, you observe, not himself. Aaron and Moses ask, *What are we, that ye murmur against us?* We are nothing; but, in consideration of the office God had invested them with, they add, *Your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord* §. In this view what have ministers to boast? Yet how evidently must they

* Philipp. ii. 29, 30.

‡ Rom. vi. 13.

† Luke x. 16.

§ Exod. xvi. 7; 8.

be revered for their work's sake? Suffer me therefore to ask, have you accounted ministers as servants and representatives of Christ? As such have you esteemed and honoured them, neither despising them for the meanness of their gifts, nor, if they have been of more distinguished talents, paying respect to their abilities instead of their office? Have you at all times behaved respectfully towards them; bearing with their infirmities (for they are men, and not angels), and concealing as far as you might their frailties? Especially have you never behaved irreverently towards them in the execution of their public trust, by slighting, despising, railing at, or jesting upon their messages brought you from God? Have you, like David, patiently heard their reproofs, saying with him, *I have sinned*, when it has been said to your heart, *Thou art the man**; or, in the spirit of the ill-tutored children of Bethel to Elisha, have you said, *Go up, thou bald-head* †? As far as any have failed in reverence toward their ministers, they will be found not only to have sinned against God, but also against their own souls; for to profit by a ministry there must needs be a reverent regard to the institution of Christ in the appointment of it; otherwise, if that be wanting, and the ordinance of God disregarded, there is nothing of that spirit of meekness wherein only we can receive into our hearts the word that is able to save our souls. But this enters into the

Second duty of ministers and people. Ministers

* 2 Sam. xii. 7, 13.

† 2 Kings ii. 23.

must diligently dispense the word; and people must meekly receive it.—*Ministers must dispense the word.* This is the means of executing their office; they are appointed purposely to deliver, explain, and apply God's messages of reproof, direction, and comfort, which are written in the Scripture. And this it is their office and duty to do, as need is, with all freedom, diligence, and simplicity. It is their business to search, understand, and explain the way of salvation contained in the Scriptures, so that their people may if they will be instructed in the whole counsel of God towards them, set forth, not from man's inventions, nor upon man's authority, but from the plain word of God, according to the express injunction, *Teaching them all things whatsoever I have commanded you.* You find they must teach what Christ has commanded, and nothing else; and *all* this they must teach, withholding nothing profitable to salvation. Herein they must be painful and unwearied, never tired of their work, but spending and improving their time in such a manner as to be themselves better instructed, and to be prepared with such discourses as may best tend to the edification of their people. It is their business on the one hand to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, to make known to those who are seeking God the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the consolations of the Spirit, to the end that the bruised may be healed, the broken-hearted bound up, the servants of Jesus established by the seasonable ministration of the promises and sacraments. On the other hand, it is their business *boldly to rebuke vice*, to stand up against iniquity, to

watch the sins that abound, to oppose to them the threatenings of God's word: and herein to set their faces as brass, neither to be ashamed nor afraid to tell the house of Jacob their sins; as becomes those who are set on purpose to confound the kingdom of Satan, and to exalt the kingdom of their Master, Christ. In a word, they must diligently, perseveringly, and immovably minister the Gospel for the honour of God and the salvation of men; neither of which can any other way be forwarded or maintained but by the Gospel. All this may seem an easy task to those who are not engaged in it: but how much pains will it cost to understand all these things! how much denial of flesh and blood to go through the private and public labours that will be found in a faithful execution of this work! and, above all, what firmness and disinterestedness is needful in honestly opposing the Gospel to the authority, maxims, and practices of a wicked world! But, whether ministers have thus dispensed the word or not, this is their duty, and the very end of their office; and, as St. Paul saith, *Wo will be unto them if they preach not the Gospel**.—The people must *meekly receive the word*, which it is the duty and office of ministers thus to dispense to them. If it is the duty of ministers to teach, it must be the duty of people to learn; if their business is to instruct in the ways of God, then it is the people's to walk in them. *Obey them that have rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls as they that must give an account; that they may do it with*

* 1-Cor. ix. 16.

joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you *. The main thing in this obedience and submission is to obey the doctrine the minister preaches out of God's word; which, as the passage intimates, will be as delightful to the minister as it is and will be profitable to the people. But when people run quite contrary, hear indeed, and are, it may be, very kind to the minister, yet have no care to practise what he teaches them, they do not their duty to him, they disregard his office, they bring him to daily grief, they discourage and weaken his hands, and cause him to pour out sad complaints before God on their behalf. Nothing is plainer than the duty of the people in this case; they must attend the ministration of the word at the mouth of the minister; they must wait, with humble, meek, and teachable hearts, upon this divine institution; they must hear it as the word of God; they must lay it up in their hearts, and shew forth their profiting by their practice. And in proportion as this is done the design of a ministry is answered, God is glorified, and the Church is edified. Now therefore if any would know whether they have done their duty to their ministers, they must look into their hearts and lives, and see if they can find transcribed in them their humility, faith, holiness, and heavenly-mindedness, the lessons they have heard from God's minister. As far as they come short, they will of necessity condemn themselves. And then they must make inquiry whence it has been that so much seed sown upon them hath brought forth so little fruit, it may be none at all: whether they have

* Heb. xiii. 17.

not heard lightly, irreverently, contentiously, curiously; whether they have not attended to the man rather than the minister, saying with the people in Ezekiel's days, *Come, let us see how the prophet will succeed to-day*; whether they have not suffered the devil to catch away the seed sown on their hearts, by going away and quickly forgetting all in company or vanity. All must inquire, why, after so many reproofs delivered, their corruptions are so strong? after so many promises declared, their faith and other graces are so weak? after so much teaching, they are so ignorant and unenlightened? in short, why they have done so little of their duty to their minister in that point wherein, if he be a true one, he eminently desires to see them submit to him?

Here is a grand inquiry on the one part and the other; and such as, if honestly made, will leave both condemned; and both you and we shall be crying out, *Lord, have mercy upon us*. I am sure it behoves us ministers to make diligent search, seeing we have so dreadful a denunciation levelled against us, if we forbear to speak the truth through sloth, cowardice, or desire of pleasing men. 'Son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore thou shalt hear the word from my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hands*.' Surely after this none can

* Ezek. iii. 17, 18.

be angry at us that we speak freely. And for *you*, my brethren, doth it not behove you to inquire how you have heard the word at our mouths? That is an awful sentence of our Lord's, and implies much more than it speaks, *Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust from under your feet for a testimony against them* *. To which I might add many more equally alarming, and enough to stir you up to deep humiliation for your neglect or abuse of God's ordinance, by which we are appointed ministers of his word to you.

Thirdly.—It is the duty of ministers to give themselves up to their work; and the people must communicate unto them in all good things.—Ministers must give themselves up to their work. Their ministerial office is their proper calling; nor should they have any other but upon necessity or charity, as was the case of St. Paul. Indeed they will find employment enough for their time, without going out of the way of their duty, if they have their heart in their work. *Give attendance*, saith St. Paul to Timothy, *to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine; neglect not the gift that is in thee. Meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all* †. It is a strange mistake, you see, that ministers have little or nothing to do. Surely, if they mind their business, they will find no leisure for vain pleasures, and will spend as little time and thought as they can upon the cares of the world. And this ministers

* Mark vi. 11.

† 1 Tim. iv. 13, 14, 15.

among us have obliged themselves to by an ordination-promise; they will lay aside the study of the world and the flesh, and give themselves up to such employments as are proper to their calling. They are to separate themselves as much as may be from worldly engagements, their province being to study and promote the interests of Jesus, and the happiness of their people in a better life. You should see them therefore minding this one thing, unremitting in their labours, and evidently manifesting the importance of their office, by their diligence in it, and attention to it. *Give thyself wholly to them*; to thy labours, thy studies, thy Master, thy people. This is the employment of the minister.—And if it be, then the duty of the people must be on the other hand to communicate to their ministers in all good things. *If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things**? It is the people's duty freely, and without grudging, to help their minister with sufficient allowance of the things of this life, that he may be at leisure without distraction to attend upon the duties of his calling. Were I speaking to another congregation, I should have occasion to press this point, seeing there are many, *who, as one saith, are wont to think all well-gotten which they can defraud and deceive the minister of*. But, as it is, I do but hint this duty of the minister's maintenance as that which the people ought gladly and cheerfully to afford: and pass to the

Fourth duty of ministers and people, namely, mini-

* Gal. vi. 6. 1 Cor. ix. 11.

sters must be examples of what they teach, and people must follow their example as far as they are so.—Ministers must set a good example. There is a very remarkable direction to this purpose given to Timothy; *Let no man despise thy youth.* But Timothy might be apt to say, “How can I hinder them?” Why this way, saith St. Paul, *Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity**; do this, and, though thou be young, they will not despise thee. An example in the minister is a main point; and there is none the Scripture insists more upon, as you may see, especially in the Epistles of St. Paul, particularly in those to Timothy and Titus. I will mention but one, *In all things shew thyself a pattern of good works, in doctrine, uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity* †. Titus and every other minister must be a pattern of Christian godliness, must live what he preaches, must go before his flock in every point of duty. His example must correct vice, must countenance all manner of godliness, in a word, must recommend the Gospel. He must be the foremost in breaking through sinful customs; he must lead the way in every point of self-denying and difficult duty. He must not *lay burdens on others, which he will not touch himself with one of his fingers* ‡. He must not give encouragement to sin by the least appearance of compliance; his conduct must be a continual exemplification of the doctrines he teaches. Little can be expected by us

* 1 Tim. iv. 12.

† Titus ii. 7.

‡ Luke xi. 45.

(to speak the truth, we can expect nothing) among our people, when our conduct does not go hand in hand with our doctrine. The people, too ready to take advantage of every encouragement to sin, will set our examples against what we teach them, and plead prescription for their iniquities from ours. Through the corruption of nature the bias is strong to the side of vice; from whence it happens, that though the best examples produce little of the good effect upon others which might be hoped for from them, examples that are not of the best will go great lengths in hardening others in sin. Wherefore, since sin has so powerful an advocate in the heart, the servants of Christ must not add any thing to its influence by their conduct, but reprove it by their example, and give all the weight in their power to the cause of Christ by joining an unblamably edifying practice to a true Christian preaching. The man of God must be every way such; every where and in every thing must live for Christ, so letting his light shine before men that they may see his good works, and glorify God by submitting to Christ.—On the other hand, it must be the duty of the people to follow the good examples of their ministers, to follow them as they follow Christ. It is a foolish conceit in the mouths of many, that such and such things are not right in ministers. Why then, they are not right in others neither. For what, is there one rule in Scripture for the minister's duty and conduct, and another for the people's? Or can the minister do or forbear a jot more than the law of God

requires of all? The whole possible difference lies here, that the minister, as the servant of Christ, is peculiarly obliged to go before others in doing and forbearing. But suppose he should not; if he does not forbear what he should forbear, will this excuse the people for committing sin? Or if he does not do what he should, will God therefore excuse the people for neglecting their duty? This is a senseless conceit, and exactly calculated to render ministerial example on the side of godliness of no effect. What is the minister's good example to the people, if it be conceived as something peculiar, which they are not to follow? See the device of Satan! When the minister does any thing amiss, then the cry is, *Well may we if the minister does so*: but when the minister acts in an exemplary manner, then the tone is altered to, *Such things are very well in a clergyman*. But remember it is the duty of the people to be influenced by, and to follow universally, the good example of the minister in holy conversation, and in opposing the world to follow him; to observe his conduct, not to encourage themselves in wickedness, but to be directed and encouraged in godliness; not presently to judge him precise in abstaining from common customs, but to suspect there may be somewhat amiss in them, seeing he avoids them; nor to imagine he is righteous beyond measure in doing more than others, but modestly suppose that, being the teacher of others, he is better acquainted with his and their duty. But,

Fifthly and lastly.—It is the common duty of ministers and people to pray for each other. Well it be-

cometli ministers (who are the servants of Christ, and have so difficult a task on their hand in his behalf with the untoward hearts of men, as well as to oppose the whole power of spiritual wickedness) to pray earnestly and frequently for God's blessing and grace to fall continually on their ministrations; that they may be successful upon the people, that God will forgive their sins, will not be provoked to take his Spirit from them; that the Lord himself will take them in hand, heal their sinful nature, and cause his word to work effectually on their hearts. We find St. Paul continually speaking of his bowing his knees before God, with ceaseless importunity, for the establishment and growth of believers. And Samuel says, *God forbid that I should sin against the Lord, by ceasing to pray for you* *. Indeed it would be a foolish and vain thing, should a minister think of doing any good among his people without praying for them. Should he preach with all the zeal of Paul and all the eloquence of Apollos, all would be fruitless unless God gave the increase. It is not man's labour and wisdom, but the Spirit, that can make the word effectual to humble the lofty looks of the proud, and to strengthen the feeble hands of the faint. And therefore it is the duty of ministers to pray much for their people, and to give God the praise if any fruit hath been wrought by their ministry. When Jeremiah could not prevail with the people he was sent to, he says, like a true Prophet, *My soul shall weep in secret places for your*

* 1 Sam. xii. 23.

pride *. If public preaching cannot prevail, I will try what private mourning will do; if I cannot move you to repent, I will try if I cannot move God to convert you. By such exercises the minister will also find the enlargement of his heart much increased toward his people, and his soul stirred up to much fatherly love and compassion, which will mightily help him in his labours toward them.—We hear often on the other side of the people's praying for their ministers; *Pray for us*, saith the Apostle to the Hebrews †.

To the Thessalonians he says, *Pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified even as it is with you; and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men ‡*. This is a great duty lying on the people. And yet it is to be feared there are many who never once offered up one true and hearty prayer for their minister, that he might be furnished with abilities for so great and weighty an office; that he might have the gift of wisdom and utterance to divide the word aright; that the Lord would be with his mouth to speak to the consciences of his hearers, and to their edifying; many again that never thanked God for stirring up their minister's heart at any time to reprove sin with more earnestness, and to call to repentance with more power; as if it were no mercy to them that God opened their minister's heart thus to be plain and pressing with them. You must judge for yourselves, whether herein doth not lie a considerable cause of so much fruitless hearing among you.

* Jer. xiii. 17.

† Heb. 13, 18.

‡ 2 Thess. iii. 1, 2.

The institution of a ministry being God's, the duties which I have now laid before you, on one part and the other, arising out of that institution, must be matters of much importance. And it will become us on both sides to consider how we have discharged them. Not in such manner, I am confident, either you or we, that both have not great need of God's forgiveness. And, blessed be God, he sits on a throne of mercy prepared by the blood of the Redeemer. Thither then let us come with contrite and penitent hearts, and our sins shall not be our destruction. And, while we are pleading the riches of redeeming love for our pardon, we shall find our hearts animated with vigour to run in the ways of God's commandments. Happy they who have so tasted that our God is gracious, as that their hearts are thereby sincerely inclined to keep his laws.

S E R M O N XXXIX.

GALATIANS iii. 24.

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

THE plain design of the fifth commandment, which for several Sundays has afforded matter of consideration, is to regulate by God's immediate authority the divers relations men stand in one to another. And this he does not so much to preserve the peace and good order of society (though it is manifest that, where there is no regard to God's command in the several social relations, there society has no stable foundation), as, by the influence of these several relations religiously observed, to promote his own glory in the maintenance of piety among sinful and corrupted creatures. By a distinct consideration of the relative duties it manifestly appears how peculiarly God's honour and our present happiness would be promoted, did we all faithfully discharge the social trusts he has committed to us: while it may be equally easy to observe that the great disgrace which religion suffers, and much of that vexation and misery that is in the world, can be ascribed to no other cause than our disregard

of our duty in these relations. Were parents and children, masters and servants, husbands and wives, ministers and people, magistrates and subjects, all kinds of superiors and inferiors, what they should be in these several relations, what a resemblance of heaven would there be upon earth! how would peace and happiness abound; how would religion flourish; how would God be glorified! especially would all this appear and be produced from the conscientious regard that should be paid to the duties of magistrates and subjects; which being a relation of a more large extent, and taking in all persons, the good effects of faithfulness in it on the one part and the other would be more universal; as, on the contrary, disregard to the duties of such relation on one or both sides must be more dreadfully destructive to God's honour in the world and man's social happiness. Whether this nation of ours be not an instance in proof of what I am advancing, I will leave any man to judge. With all the means of public happiness in our hands, which any nation this day in the world can boast of, what are we? Are not our counsels distracted, our measures and undertakings unsuccessful*? Is there not somewhat at the bottom, which, like the worm that smote Jonah's gourd, withers all our hopes, and lays us open to the stroke of affliction, as the Prophet's fainting head was exposed to the raging heat

* This Sermon was preached at Truro, May 22, 1757, when our affairs had a very cloudy aspect; but it pleased God afterwards to favour our counsels, and give great success to the British arms against their enemies.

of the sun when that friendly shelter was taken away? And what is this but want of conscience toward God in those who are intrusted with authority, and in those who are in subjection? Is there any shew of conscience toward God in those who are in authority, I mean those who are in public-trust? Does not every man mean himself, not God's glory, (alas, how little is that thought of!) not the public good? And if you cast your eye to the side of the people, can you see any thing like obedience to governors, for conscience-sake? Is not every man set up for a judge of his governors, blaming all things, directing all things, determining all things in his own conceit; our liberty turned into a factious licentiousness? There is little conscience toward God on either part; and from hence we are naturally necessarily and judicially sinking under confusions at home and disappointments abroad. What can put a stop to our certain ruin? Nothing on our part but the fear of God falling on our hearts. We may call for a change of men and measures; our expectations may run high from this and that enterprise; but we shall sooner or later in the issue but *reap the whirlwind*, as the Prophet speaks, unless the fear of God possess our hearts, and regard to his honour and law influence us to a faithful discharge of our duty as governors and people. Let us open therefore our hearts to conviction, while I am laying out the duties of magistrates and subjects, which is the

Fifth relation provided for by the commandment now under consideration. In order to the clearer understanding the scope and extent of this relation, let

it be remembered that government is *an ordinance of God*, not as to the particular form of it, but with regard to the obligations which rulers and subjects are mutually brought into by being members of society. Here God's authority comes in, and obliges to the respective duties of this relation. And then be it further considered what is God's design in this ordinance. This the Apostle plainly intimates in that direction to Timothy, *I exhort that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for kings, and for all that are in authority ; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty* *. In the latter clause of this passage you may observe how the end of government is marked out to be, *that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life ;* and then the means hereto are added, *in all godliness and honesty*. There can be no quiet and peace without godliness and honesty ; and therefore the design of government is, by maintaining godliness and honesty, to preserve quietness and peace among a people.

Now godliness and honesty are to be maintained, and so peace and quietness promoted, only by the faithful discharge of the duties of that station we are called to in government, whether it be a station of authority or of subjection. There must be rulers for the maintenance of godliness and honesty ; these must look to their work ; and they must also be submitted to, and supported in their carrying it on : otherwise, if rulers be negligent, or people will not submit, the

* 1 Tim. ii. 12.

design of government is overturned; and as godliness and honesty are not maintained by it, so neither are quietness and peace procured. From the whole thus stated, it will be easy to see what are the duties of magistrates and subjects. If government be God's ordinance for the quietness and peace of society, by means of godliness and honesty maintained hereby, then,

First.—Those in authority must regard themselves as God's ministers appointed for these ends.—And subjects must reverence them as the ministers of God.

Secondly.—Magistrates must use their authority to the maintenance of godliness, honesty, and peace.—And subjects must obey them in their lawful commands and administrations.

Thirdly.—Magistrates must look to and provide for the public necessities, according to the nature of their offices.—And subjects must cheerfully contribute to bear them out in doing so.

Fourthly.—They must mutually pray for God's blessing to make the whole effectual.

First.—Magistrates must regard themselves as God's ministers, appointed for the maintenance of godliness, honesty, peace, and quietness.—And subjects must reverence them as bearing God's authority towards them.

Magistrates must regard themselves as God's ministers. *By me*, says the sovereign Judge, *kings reign, and princes decree justice; by me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth* *. Magistrates,

* Prov. viii. 15, 16.

you find, are *God's deputies*. *There is no power but of God*, saith St. Paul; *the powers that be are ordained of God**. You may see what magistrates ought to be, in the direction given by the same Apostle, a little lower in the same chapter; when, insisting on the duties of submission and paying tribute, he calls magistrates, again and again, ministers of God; *He is the minister of God for good. He is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. They are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing*. Wherefore as God's ministers they must regard themselves; not set up to serve themselves but God's glory in the good of the people he hath committed to them. Magistrates are not set up over others by God's ordinance to swell up their hearts with pride and ambition, to indulge them in their own naturally wayward will, to fill their purses, or to encourage them in sloth, luxury, and extravagance; no, but to be ministers of God for the people's good, in ruling according to the wholesome laws of the constitution, to be nursing fathers and nursing mothers to them. Yet authority is a great temptation to a corrupted heart; and it will behove all who have been or are in authority and trust, in places of lower as well as of the highest consideration, to make diligent inquiry whether they have humbly regarded themselves as the ministers of God; whether they have had in view to serve his glory in their places; whether they have executed their trust with a pure design of rendering their office effectually useful to the people

* Rom. xiii. 1.

under them ; whether they have had no indirect aims to their own worldly honour ; whether they have not exercised their authority to the indulgence of their own self-will ; whether they have not had a sinful respect to their profit ; in short, whether they have purely designed to glorify God in their office, and whether there has not been something or other in their conduct that would argue a want of such purity and simplicity of intention, and manifest an ambitious, proud, wilful, selfish aim.

It is worth while to consider the direction given to Moses respecting the choice of magistrates. This will shew what sort of persons they ought to be. It may be found in the eighteenth chapter of Exodus, at the twenty-first verse ; *Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness, and place such over them.* Magistrates must be *able men*, such as have skill and ability for their employment ; they must be *such as fear God*, who believe his eye is over them, and that they shall be accountable to him for their conduct : men who make a conscience of their office, and will neither neglect nor betray it. They must be *men of truth*, to be depended upon for their integrity, who will not be double-hearted, or act a bad part upon any consideration ; and *hating covetousness*, persons not to be biassed by any regards of interest, and who are above seeking themselves in the execution of their trust. That is, in a word, they must be men who will be at pains to understand their duty, and mean only

the glory of God and the good of the public in the discharge of it.

On the other part subjects must reverence magistrates as bearing God's authority. It is not enough to obey the lawful commands of magistrates; this is nothing in the sight of God, if it do not issue from a reverence of their authority in the heart. The word is, *Honour the king* *. It lies in the temper of the heart; the magistrate must be honoured because God has honoured him; God's authority must be seen resting upon him, and for the sake of that his person, as God's minister, must be revered. Many a person will have some fear of the magistrate for wrath's sake, because he has the power of punishing; many are struck with the pomp and solemnity of his appearance; many are influenced to a kind of awe by the dignity of his station: but none of this is honouring the magistrate as the minister of God. We then only properly honour the magistrate when we honour God in his person. That was true reverence in David, when he said concerning Saul, *I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he is the Lord's anointed* †. Saul was the Lord's anointed; that was the foundation of David's reverence. What then shall we say of those in our days who have no reverence of magistrates? What account do they make of God's ordinance? or how will they answer it to him at his judgment? Yet there is a visible irreverence every where towards those in authority. A li-

* 1 Pet. ii, 17.

† 1 Sam. xxiv. 11.

centious spirit is gone out, which does not *scar God*, and so does *not honour the king, and those who bear office under him* *. It is a sinful irreverence to *speak evil of the rulers of the people* †. Then what place what house, what tongue is exempt? How disrespectfully have you often heard persons in the highest as well as the lowest offices spoken of! what rash interpretations put upon all their public conduct! how have they been treated, as if there were no difference between them and us! What, because we are a free people, may we therefore set aside God's commandment, and forget that we owe reverence to those who represent God in the state, and are eminently distinguished by the mark of his authority? But it will be said, if they behaved in their office as they ought, they would be respected by us. This makes no difference in the matter; the reverence is due to the man because of his office, not to the office because of the man. Let the man be what he will, the office is still the same; and, as long as he bears it, he must be revered because set in authority. The truth is, there is no reverence amongst us paid to magistrates because of their office: if they behave well indeed they shall get some respect; but then, to what is that respect paid, to the office or to the man? If to the man, what has religion and the command of God to do in the case? To be plain, all honouring of magistrates for the Lord's sake seems in a manner out of doors; scarce any one thinks of them as ministers of God; hence they have lost their

* 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14, 17.

† Acts xxiii. 5.

authority, their hands are weakened, they have no hold upon our consciences, and there remains chiefly the form without the power of governors.

If there be any one national vice in this kingdom, any one that overtops all the rest, it is want of reverence for authority. How familiarly are we come to think and speak of our governors! how free are we to censure all their proceedings! how ready, as has appeared lately all over the land, to take the redress of our calamities out of our governors' hands, and to do ourselves right, as we think it! To go no further than this very place for an exemplification of the spirit that prevails, what religious reverence has been paid to our magistracy? There is indeed some fear of their power, some respect to their fortunes; but where is the reverence due to them as ministers of God, while one and another is at every turn speaking so irreverently of them, and not seldom even to them? It is in no degree better, I am very confident, elsewhere. It cannot be otherwise: as Christian piety has decayed, a licentious undutiful spirit hath taken place in our hearts; and as we have forgotten to fear God, we have learnt to disregard man. So it is in fact, all regard to authority is generally departed, whoever will may see it; methinks we can hardly help seeing it whether we will or no. Yet the consequences are above all things to be dreaded. With your leave I will mention two of them.

The first is, when a nation has cast off regard to governors, it has actually rejected God's ordinance, which government was above shewn to be. Gover-

nors being God's ministers in the state, to cast off regard to their authority is to fly directly in God's face as to the point of government, and to reject that very method which he hath established for national peace and prosperity. Now as far as this is our case, it is plain he must be provoked at us as a people. When the Israelites would have a king, they did not mean to cast off all regard to authority, yet it was a slight put upon God's majesty, and therefore he gave them a king in his anger. But when a people will own no authority, but flatly oppose the ordinance of God, this is a higher insult offered to him, an avowed rejection of his institution; nor can they reasonably expect but that his hand shall be against them to punish and consume them till they be no more a people. And,

Secondly.—When a nation has lost regard to authority, the only cement of society is gone, and they must fall in pieces of course, be eaten up by domestic confusions, or be made an easy prey to an enemy from abroad. Can any society subsist without somewhat to tie it together? But when regard to authority is gone, there is no longer any tie subsisting, by which the people are bound to their governors. The outward form of the constitution may remain for a season, but the life of it is no more. There is an actual spirit of rebellion in that people; they will do as they list, nothing but force can restrain them. If force do restrain them, they are slaves; if it do not, they will sooner or later be devoured one of another.

Upon these considerations, the truth of which are

but too sadly made out to us in part by the hand of God on the side of our enemies against us, as well as by the uncommon confusions among those who are at the head of our affairs, is there not just cause to conclude we are in greater danger from ourselves than from all others; and that the fears of those who discern the face of the times with an eye to God's providence, and the natural consequence of national vices, are but too justly grounded? The remedy is indeed at hand, if we had the grace to make use of it. If religion revived, conscience would grow up with it, and then there would be found such a religious regard to government as would quickly make this whole people as one man; whose strength thus compacted by the supply of all the members, would, by the blessing of God, soon render us capable of maintaining our ground against all that should rise up against us. Wherefore, for the sake of our sinking country, let us return unto the Lord; let us pray him to send out his Spirit among us; let us contend earnestly for the revival of religion; and let us be patterns to all men of that fear of God and honour of his ministers, the want of which must unavoidably issue in our ruin, present and eternal.

Secondly.—Magistrates must use their authority for the maintenance of godliness, honesty, quietness, and peace. For the maintenance of all these they are God's ministers, and for the sake of supporting them to his glory he has imparted of his authority to them. Within the compass of these lies the whole business of the civil magistrates. They must use their autho-

rity to promote *godliness* or *religion*, by preserving the free and public exercise of it unmolested, and by punishing wickedness and vice in a due execution of the laws against it. They must use their authority to maintain *honesty*; not only must they punish those who are dishonest, but also they must labour to remove all the occasions of it, such as places of idle resort, houses of gaming and lewdness, which are among the plentiful causes of knavery, theft, and other such kinds of villany. They must use their authority for keeping *peace* and *quietness* among the people; good order, and repressing the turbulent spirits of violent and troublesome persons, lie within the reach of the magistrate's sword, and he must not fail to use it as need requires. These are the general duties of his office, which I do but hint at, because it is my business rather to insist on the *diligence*, *boldness*, and *impartiality* wherewith the magistrate ought to execute his office. He must be *diligent*, look well to his trust, have his eyes every where about him, not suffer the sword to lie asleep in the scabbard, but have it always in his hand for the *punishing of evil-doers*. As also he must be careful to give a due measure of *praise to them that do well*. An indolent magistrate is a very bad one, unfaithful to God and to the trust committed to his care, and while he sleeps the guilt of a thousand sins and miseries light upon his head. If he sleeps he bears the sword in vain. To diligence he must add *boldness*; he must know no man and fear no man in the execution of his office; he must not be moved from his duty by apprehensions of any future conse-

quence that may attend his doing right; he must not be deterred by threatenings, nor melted down by a false pity, nor wearied out by complaints, entreaties, or the intercession of friends. He must go on to do his duty, though the world be against him, and in defiance to all the pleadings against it he will find in himself. He must regard no opposition, but go out sword in hand against a multitude of evil-doers. He must not decline any thing which the honour of God and the welfare of the people require at his hand. He must have the courage to be singular as need is in executing his trust, and must not be biassed by what shall be said or thought of him. In short, he must be in the State what Elijah was in the Church, *very jealous for the Lord God* *. *For the judgment is God's* †. Nor must he stop here. He must be also *impartial*; he must know neither hatred nor affection; interest must not be allowed to throw a grain into either scale; he must deal alike by all, the rich as well as the poor. The law must be his rule, and he must make no difference between those who come under the stroke of it: here he must be blind. In this manner the magistrate must use his authority in the maintenance of godliness, honesty, and peace. To maintain these must be his aim in the whole exercise of his office; and such is the diligence, boldness, and impartiality with which he must behave himself in so important a trust. You see, if the honour of a magistrate be great, his labour is not less. Well may

* Kings xix. 10.

† Deut. i. 17.

every magistrate cry out, “ Who is sufficient for these things ? Lord have mercy upon me ! ” And very reasonably may he expect the concurrence of the subject to relieve him as much as may be from so heavy a burden. This he has a right to.

For, on the other hand, God has laid it on subjects to obey magistrates in all their lawful commands and administrations. And, were this done, the duty of the magistrate would be more easy and pleasant. Now nothing can be more express than the injunctions of Scripture on this head. *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him* *. *Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates* †. *Let every soul be subject to the higher powers* ‡. The point to be considered is, wherein doth this obedience and subjection consist ? It consists in a conformity *with the laws of the land* (supposing them not contrary to the laws of God), and in a *submission to the magistrate in the execution of them*. To obey magistrates doth principally imply obedience to the laws of the state ; from which whoever doth wilfully depart in any instance is disobedient to that government under which he is, and sins against God. Yet to obey magistrates doth also imply further, that it is the subject’s duty not to resist, but to submit to the magistrate in the execution of such laws ; for laws are nothing, unless life be given to them by the vigilance and activity of the magistrate. So that the sub-

* 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14.

† Titus iii. 1.

‡ Rom. xiii. 1.

ject's obedience reaches to all the laws, and to the lawful execution of them. He may not transgress the laws, neither may he any way stop the course of their sanctions to render them ineffectual. Now, I say, were there this conscientious obedience in subjects, the execution of government would be a more easy matter to those in authority; indeed they would have little else to do but to go through the forms and ceremonies of their office. But, as it is, disobedience in subjects is sure to provide them work enough for the exercise of their courage and zeal. There are so many sins against God, that are injurious to the state, and therefore punishable by the laws of it, such as drunkenness, sabbath-breaking, lewdness, swearing; there are so many sins directly against the state itself, such as frauds in public trust, in payments of customs and duty, gaming, unlawful houses, cheating, oppression, theft, corruption in elections, and numberless others, by which the peace and welfare of society is so directly struck at, that the magistrate shall not want employment. Indeed there is more than he can possibly effect, and evil-workers will often escape his watchfulness and diligence: but then they cannot escape the judgment of God, who knows all, and will surely punish all in the day of account. Seek therefore after whatever you have done in disobedience to government, and repent of it betimes, calling upon God for mercy, for Jesus Christ's sake, else you shall find at last that those who have resisted *shall receive to themselves damnation* *.

* Rom. xiii. 2.

Thirdly.—Magistrates must look to and provide for the public necessities, according to the nature of their office.—And subjects must cheerfully contribute to bear them out in so doing.

It is the part of governors to look after the public exigencies of every kind, to provide all manner of servants for the state, to prepare every thing which the public need requires, to keep the kingdom in good order at home by the wholesome and seasonable execution of laws, to maintain it against all its enemies abroad, and, when necessity is, to carry on war: in short, the management of public affairs lies on governors. They are not set up for their own ends, to fill their pockets, to gratify their ambitious hearts, to aggrandize their families, and vainly to seek for themselves a name and honour in their generation. God has no such design in advancing one above another. They are servants of the state; their office is designed for the public good; they are appointed by God *to attend continually upon this very thing* *. Let them look to themselves therefore, that are looking after places of public trust, with what views they are seeking them. It should be merely to serve God and the people that offices of trust should be undertaken; with fear and trembling, because of the weight and importance of them. But is this the only aim? Is all the strife for places we hear of simply owing to a love of their country? Are men so zealous now-a-days for the public good, that they cannot endure

* Rom. xiii. 4. 6.

any damage should accrue to it; and therefore are they pressing their shoulders under the heaviest burdens to serve it? Can these things be so when the means used to obtain preferments are so indirect, dishonest, illegal, and unchristian? when votes are bought for money; when the kingdom presents us with a scene of iniquity at every season of election, which makes every thinking man admire that God does not sink us a thousand fathom into the heart of the earth? Are these things so, when not merit but ability to make interest is the only road to preferment, not only in the state, but even the church? I could mention proofs without number, that ambition and covetousness rule all; sad proofs, which ought to make us all tremble in the too-probable expectation of approaching ruin. But, be all this as it may, it is still the express duty of governors conscientiously to have regard to the public, and diligently to care for the public affairs; and for their faithfulness herein they shall answer at a higher judgment.

It is the duty of subjects on their part cheerfully to contribute to the public expenses. There is no disputing whether this be the will of God. *Render to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom* *, are the express dictates of his Spirit. And for what is this tribute and custom paid but for the public maintenance of the state, of which every one receives the benefit? Here another common sin comes under our view; people not only

* Rom. xiii. 7.

pay their dues to the state grudgingly, in direct opposition to Christ's example, who, though he was free from the payment, yet readily made it, lest he should offend them *; but by art and contrivance withhold their dues, not paying the customs for that they buy, contrary to law, and making, many of them, a secret trade and livelihood of this ungodly gain. This may be called indeed *only cheating the king*, as if that were a harmless thing: but it is in truth cheating the state, that is, cheating every honest man in it, that pays his taxes duly. And methinks cheating at any rate is not so commendable a thing for one who is called a Christian. But it is easy to see where the cheat will rest at last, even upon the souls of such, who, contrary to the laws of God and man, proceed to do what they know in their own consciences to be sinful.

The fourth and last duty of magistrates and subjects is to pray for another. *I exhort that supplications be made for kings, and all in authority* †, is the direction for subjects. And you may see in all the pious governors in the Old Testament what is the duty of magistrates in this respect. Surely we have need to pray now, if ever; magistrates should pray for the people, and they should pray for the magistrates, that the Lord, for Jesus Christ's sake, will take pity upon us, and turn our hearts. By prayer we own government to be the ordinance of God, and commend the guidance of it to him. But do we pray on either

* Matt. xvii. 24—27.

† 1 Tim. ii. 1.

part? It looks sadly as if we did not; at least not faithfully; for I am sure there are little marks of it to be seen; a praying people being always a godly people, and a people that trusts in God more than in fleets and armies. But God calls us to pray by his judgments. There were no better token in our behalf, than that our hearts were stirred up to do so. We may think as we will, but, unless God helps us, all is over with us; all our counsels shall come to nought, all our undertakings fall to the ground. And can we expect he will help us, remaining as we are? O for this prayerless people! we have not, we do not *call on God in the day of our trouble* *.

To conclude: Put all together, and see our provoking sins against God's ordinance: see, each of you, the share yourself has in them as a member of civil society. Lay this to heart, and surely the judgments of God on the land will lay you low. You will cry for mercy for yourself and the people. The law will drive you to Christ. There you will find relief, pardon for the past, and grace to walk in God's laws for the future. Do this, and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall be with you.

* Psalm cvii. 6, 13, 19, 28.

S E R M O N XL.

GALATIANS iii. 24.

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

IN several discourses from these words I have been opening the commandments before you for examination; and am now to conclude what is required in the fifth commandment. The precept of honouring parents is of very extensive latitude, taking in all relative duties; the principal of which have been already spoken to. You have heard the respective duties of parents and children, masters and servants, husbands and wives, ministers and people, magistrates and subjects. I have now only to add, that there is a mutual duty arising from various other distributions of distinctions, which God has settled in the world between one man and another. These divide themselves into three heads:—

First.—Outward distinctions.

Secondly.—Natural gifts and acquisitions.

Thirdly.—Spiritual attainments.

First.—There are outward distinctions God has distributed in the world, which, as God's providential

appointments, do require observance and reverence in inferiors, and faithfulness and humility in those who are distinguished by them. Now these outward distinctions arise from a difference in *quality, wealth, or age.*

First.—There is a difference in *quality* among men. Some are high, others are low. So it is in all states, the few are distinguished by birth and rank from the many who are of less consideration. But who has made this difference? *It is the Lord that maketh poor, and maketh rich; he bringeth low, and lifteth up**. And if it be God's doing to put others in the world over your head, you must be sure to see God's hand in it, and to own God's allotment herein by reverencing those whom he hath advanced in the world above you. You must on no consideration destroy what God has established; adopt a levelling principle, because you think yourself wiser or better than your superiors; indeed you may be so, and therefore think yourself upon equality with the foremost, and disdain to set your foot behind them: for, after all that can be said, they are still your superiors, and God has made them so, and it will be your duty to honour and reverence them as such. There are still some outward remains of this reverence preserved in our corner of the land. People of a lower class are generally wont to uncover themselves to those of higher appearance, even though they be strangers. The usage is commendable and decent; and, as it is a proper acknow-

* 1 Sam. ii. 7.

ledgment of reverence to God in the persons of our superiors, as well as expressive of the different relations we bear one to another under God's government, so would it be well if it served to put us in mind of that inward honour which every superior in rank has a title to from us by God's appointment.— But then, on the other hand, has God set some in station and rank before others? With what design I pray you? What, for their glory, or his own? Surely he means not that their inferiors should be their slaves; nor has made the distinction to gratify pride. Yet distinction in station is a great temptation to a corrupted heart. What a deal of pride on this consideration may be seen in the world! what a lawlessness is it apt to give to our hearts in treating with those beneath us! how little apt are we to bear with them, and to be gentle towards them! what liberties are we ready to use with them, their characters and conduct! how forward to be hasty and peevish with them, to rate and scold them; and all through a proud abuse of our superiority over them. I say there is not a man in the world who has not more or less mistreated his inferiors because they are such; behaving in such manner to them as to have betrayed the pride of his heart, and a want of a due sense of the Author of that distribution which alone has set him in a state of eminence above others. Nabal's temper is that which is natural to our hearts, and his language is expressive of a deportment we are but too apt to fall into towards our inferiors; *who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? There be many servants now-a-days that break*

away every man from his master *. And then, besides this matter of mistreating inferiors, what a swelling and boasting has there always been in the world upon family and extraction, manifested in a secret disdain of such as are of lower birth, and in a haughty carriage towards them ! And, on the whole, how far short have all come of that courtesy of conduct and unfeigned condescension to those of the lowest rank, which would denote a heart duly sensible of the majesty of that God from whom this distinction was received, and for whose glory it was bestowed ?—They are very few, indeed but one in this kingdom, that are not inferiors in respect of others above them ; and there are not many who have not some under them ; so that this head may afford matter of examination to the most of us on both the parts ; and concerning both I may venture to lay it down as a certain rule, that as far as we have been stubborn inferiors we have been haughty superiors ; as, on the other side, whoever bears it with a high hand to those beneath him, can never brook reverently and humbly to stoop unto those above him.

Secondly.—*Wealth* makes another difference among men, and obliges to honour and reverence. *Riches come of God* †, the Scripture assures us ; and, if they do, God does by them mark out for respect those to whom he gives them. Now God means that we should honour those whom he himself honours. Say the worst ; say a rich man uses his riches covetously,

* 1 Sam. xxv. 10.

† 1 Chron. xxix. 12.

luxuriously, selfishly, proudly ; yea, say he uses them oppressively, to crush and do wrong to those who are poorer ; yet, when you have said all, you have only said it is a difficult matter to respect such an one because of his riches ; still God has made him rich, and therefore he must be respected. The rich must be respected because they are rich, not because of the use they make of their riches. If they make a right use of them they have a title to our reverence in another character, and we must respect them not only because they are rich, but also because they are good. The deceit, iniquity, and pride of our hearts, do in nothing shew themselves more plainly than by the preferences we are ready to make for bearing no inward honour and reverence toward superiors of every kind. How ready the plea is, He does not do his duty, he is a bad man, one cannot have any honour for him. True, not as a man, not as a Christian ; in that light you cannot reverence him ; but, as one whom God has distinguished, you may and must honour him ; it is no excuse that he is a bad man ; the point is, God has honoured him by giving him distinction in his government of the world, and therefore you cannot withdraw your reverence without denying God's hand in the matter, and rejecting his authority.—As the rich must be honoured by others, so it is their duty to honour themselves by an humble temper of mind, and a sincere endeavour to use their riches to the glory of God. You may see the whole of the rich man's Christian temper and conduct in that direction given to Timothy ; ' Charge them who are rich in this world,

‘ that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain
 ‘ riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly
 ‘ all things to enjoy : that they do good, that they be
 ‘ rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to
 ‘ communicate ; laying up in store for themselves a
 ‘ good foundation against the time to come, that they
 ‘ may lay hold on eternal life *.’ Let all who are rich
 in this world examine themselves by this passage. Have they not been *high-minded*, puffed up on their wealth ? The heart is ready to suggest, in such circumstances, Now I am somebody ; to swell and grow big upon it ; to look down upon others ; and to make little account of the gifts of such as are poorer. *The rich man is wise in his own conceit* †, saith Solomon, as if money did necessarily bring wisdom along with it. *Have they not trusted in their riches ?* not trusted in them instead of God ? I am sure we are naturally apt to trust in any thing rather than in the Lord, for it is only when we have found by experience there is help for us no way else that we shall trust in him. And how peculiarly difficult not to trust in our wealth, when we see it affording us all the supports, comforts, and conveniences of the world, and to appearance delivering us from the possibility of want ? *Have they done good with their money ?* For this reason have they valued and in this view have they used it ? Nay, but are they *rich* this way, in works of usefulness and charity ? What matters it they be otherwise rich if they be not rich in good works ? Not being so they

* 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18, 19.

† Prov. xxviii. 11.

have only *heaped treasure together for the last days**. Have they been willing to communicate, ready to distribute, and so have they been storing up for the time to come? This is the rich man in God's account; not simply he that has riches, but he that uses his riches in good works; who for Christ's sake is continually making draughts on his purse, and transferring his substance into the funds of grace and glory. That soul is in the very way to perish through want, who is rich in purse, yet poor in good works; who trusts in his riches, and boasts in his riches. Alas! such an one *sets his eyes on that which is not; his riches certainly make themselves wings, and flee away* †.

Thirdly.—Age makes a difference between men, and demands reverence and honour. *Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the Lord* ‡. Younger persons must behave with reverence towards those who are in years, and not carry themselves towards them as if they were their equals. *Honour the face of the old man: I am the Lord.* I command and require thee to do so; I will not have old age despised, but honoured; and if thou do it not, though hoary heads cannot punish thee, yet I assuredly can and will. To reverence old age is not only a piece of good manners, but a point of duty: and therefore it is said of Elihu, that he waited till Job had spoken, because they were elder than he; *I am young, and*

* James v. 3.

† Prov. xxiii. 5.

‡ Levit. xix. 32.

ye are very old, wherefore I was afraid, I durst not shew you mine opinion *. You see the practice of Elihu carries in it a reproof of the common pertness and forwardness of youth, who, conceited in their own sufficiency, will be opening themselves in every matter, and deciding that of which they who are three times their age modestly doubt. It is noted in Isaiah, as a curse that goes along with the subversion of a state, *That the children shall behave themselves proudly against the ancients* †. And if so, we have no cause to boast, I suppose, that our young people are men and women now some years sooner than they were wont to be formerly; that they affect with an unripe haste to be their own masters, make little account of the aged, and want to thrust out of the world those of years and experience.—And if such respect and reverence be due to old people, they ought by a heavenly, grave, cheerful, and condescending conduct, to put a crown of glory upon their own hoary heads. *For the hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness* ‡. But, if not, how signal a disgrace! how base and despicable a thing is that person who has outlived every thing but his vices! If there be nothing of grace upon his lips, who is just stepping into the grave, but his talk is vain, light, foolish, insignificant, lewd, or profane, what a snare is such an one to the young! how doth he tempt them to despise and cast off all reverence toward him! Is such a grey head a glory? What, when it affects the

* Job xxxii. 4. 6.

† Isaiah iii. 5.

‡ Prov. xvi. 31.

vanities of youth, when it mixes in the pleasures of boys and girls, when it casts off all reverence to itself, and seems industriously seeking to render itself ridiculous? Is this what age owes to God, and to the growing generation? No; but, as our bodies decay, so our souls should increase in gravity and soberness, in faith and love, and heavenly-mindedness and meekness. How dead should old age be to the world it is just leaving! O how detestable is covetousness and greediness, when the body is even dropping into the earth! and then how patient also, sweet, affable, and gentle, should they be! Thus they shall adorn the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and command the respect of others. But when they are seen more griping, distrustful, and worldly, with their years; when they are impatient, fretful, peevish, and froward; when their will may not be crossed a hair's breadth, and they have learnt nothing of meekness and forbearance, but are obstinate, continually angry, and displeased with all about them; then where is the honour of the hoary head, or how can they complain if they are treated without respect and reverence?—And thus much of outward distinctions, and the duties arising from them.

Secondly.—Besides these, there are *natural gifts* and *acquisitions*: such as great parts, knowledge, learning, wisdom, and other gifts of the mind. Now as these, whatever they be, and in whatever measure ministered, are God's distributions, they must be used to his glory. You think you have more sense, more knowledge, more learning, discretion, and prudence,

than another. Suppose you have; from whom did you receive these distinguishing gifts? If from God, for what end? What, that like Ahithophel, a great politician *, you might only serve your own purposes by them; or, like Tertullus †, pervert right? Did God give you them only to make you admired and esteemed, that you might make a figure in life, that people of a lower class in such gifts might truckle and bow before you, that you might disdain their slowness and ridicule their ignorance, boasting yourself on your own superiority? All this is abuse of such gifts, and yet very common is such abuse. It is no easy matter to be possessed of such gifts as make us differ, and yet to be humble in the use of them as if there were no difference. Did you never find your heart rising up with pride and conceit, when you saw your preference to others in knowledge; when they have run upon some misadventure which they would have escaped had they followed your advice; when they have sought to you for direction and counsel, and the thing has prospered? Have you never boastingly set yourself off, and contrived to let people see how expert, ready, sensible, and knowing you were? nor triumphed in your heart at least, if not in terms, and sneered on the evidence of their insufficiency in comparison of you? Were you never impatient of others' opinions, and eager to establish your own, as if you expected to be treated as an oracle? The most run great lengths this way, spoiling all by their self-

* 2 Sam. xvi. 17.

† Acts xxiv. 5.

seeking, and prostituting to the ends of their own praise the eminent gifts God has bestowed upon them. What an instance of the contrary was St. Paul! In him you see great parts, and the most excellent gifts, put to a right use; not to adorn the man, but to adorn the Gospel of Christ. So Moses had done before him; eminent as he was in all the knowledge of the Egyptians, and accomplished with the greatest natural and divine gifts, all was humbly devoted to the honour of God and the interests of his people. These are patterns set out for others of eminence this way to walk after. But do they tread in their steps, devoting their abilities to the service of the Church of Christ, yea, or even employing them in the civil interests of the community? Are they not rather used to selfish ends, to purchase reputation, interest, and honour? And is not this too much the case in every profession? Even in the lowest ranks of men, what boasting, vaunting, and despising of others, doth not a little eminence in their way produce?—But, however this be, these things are the gifts of God, and therefore reverence is due to those on whom he has bestowed them. Such are considerable men, God has made them so, and consequently marked them out for respect. Indeed, let them behave as they will, the world could not well do without them, and therefore they are a blessing from God. Indeed, while they abuse their talents, they turn their gifts to be a curse unto themselves; and when God pleases they may be a sore judgment upon others:—yet on the whole God overrules, and makes

them, act as they will, subservient to his ends in the government of the world. They must be honoured therefore, and it is a foul and base sin to be envious of them, to go about to lessen their endowments, to be continually at our butts and exceptions against them, and to be trying all the means in our power to bring them down to our standard. This is a mischievous sin, derogates from God's gifts, and hurts their usefulness. How much doth it do so if these endowments be guided and directed by a sanctified heart, and the man of parts, learning, wisdom, and prudence, be laying himself out in the cause of religion, and the present and future welfare of men! Yet this is the way of a wicked world. Even all the gifts of Jesus could not screen him from the imputation of *having a devil, and being mad* *. First, the man has the character of being *mad*, and then they run him down. This was always the way of the world. But this leads us to the remaining head, which I shall speak to in the afternoon. From what you have heard this morning you may learn two things:—

First.—The adorable wisdom of God in the government of the world, which, by distributing the whole of mankind into various ranks, stations, and seasons of life, as also by distinguishing some above others by gifts and endowments of the mind, has laid the plainest foundation for carrying on his government, forwarding the happiness of his creatures, and uniting us together in love. We may see clearly that

* John x. 20.

none of these excellent ends could have been answered had there been an equality in all these things between all men. And therefore,

Secondly.—We may learn the very destructive nature of pride, which strikes at the root of God's design in all these wise distributions. Pride, by making superiors conceited and puffed up on their distinctions, causes that they seek themselves, and not the glory of God, nor the happiness of others, in the use of them; and on the other side suggesting impatient, undutiful, and stubborn thoughts into the hearts of inferiors, will not allow that their superiors shall be of any service. While God says to the great, the wealthy, the aged and the wise, Seek my glory, seek the good of all men in these eminences I have bestowed upon thee; Pride cries with a louder cry, Thou art something, seek thyself. While God is commanding inferiors, Honour, reverence, and submit to all those whom I have set over you; stubborn inbred Pride is claiming in them the right of independency and casting off all restraints. So dreadful a thing is pride! so blessed might we be, if we were but humble! and therefore let us pray God to humble us in the sight of our sins, and especially of those we have been guilty of against this commandment, that, while we cry for his mercy with broken hearts, we may grow disposed meekly to use his gifts one towards another, and cheerfully to submit to those he has set above us in his fear for Jesus Christ's sake.—I am now,

Thirdly.—To speak of the honour to be paid to spi-

ritual attainments. Grace is God's best gift in this world; so, wherever it is given in a saving degree, it must be possessed with much humility and devotedness to God's glory; as also on the other part it must be esteemed and imitated.

The Scripture-history records a variety of persons in the Church, from the first age of the world, who were shining lights unto it, lived by faith, walked with God, and served him faithfully. And so it will be in all ages of the Church, God will not leave himself without witness, but will raise up a people to his name. Doubtless, however we live in these last and worst times, there is no inconsiderable number of such all over Christendom, men and women, who have obeyed the divine invitation, laid hold on the offered mercy, and come out from the ways and practices of a wicked world. Now hereupon arises a double inquiry.

First.—How must such persons demean themselves?

Secondly.—How must others carry it towards them?

First.—How must they demean themselves? I answer, *First, With great humility.* They may not indeed deny the gift of God, but they must think very meanly of themselves. And this is the best mark in the world of true grace, grace that will stand all weathers, and bear the shock of all temptations. Other graces make a greater shew, but without humility they have only the name of grace. Zeal and charity are well bottomed when they stand upon this; and it is this which gives the engaging sweetness of modesty and meekness unto both. The servant of Christ

must think meanly of himself, must not have a lie in his right hand when he says I am nothing, but must really mean what he says, and experience that he speaks the very truth. How nothing? Why nothing in respect of any righteousness he has in him to justify him, or any strength of his own to walk in the ways of God; nothing, because he is so corrupted, and all his best duties are so unprofitable; yea, nothing, because whatever he has of his own does but serve to hinder and defile God's work in him. Thus he must think himself nothing; and when he does he will easily esteem others better than himself, and then he will despise no weak brother; he will not be proud, and censoriously prone to mark out others' faults, because he knows so much of his own. This is the gracious man's great preservative against spiritual pride, which allowed would soon cause him to fall, and by his fall to bring so much the greater dishonour on his Master, as his profession had been more eminent. If you mean to shoot up and to shew forth the fruits of an honourable profession, you must be sure that you go deep into your heart, and be truly lowly in the estimation you have of yourself.—And then,

Secondly.—*You must use the grace God has bestowed on you to the benefit of others.* How? Your life must be exemplary. You must look that your conduct do recommend the ways of God, and reprove the ways of darkness. This is the main step to usefulness. Your light must shine: shine not affectedly, not on purpose to be taken notice of, but your behaviour must be such as manifests the power of godliness to

be in you. But is this all? Yes; nothing can be added more: for what can any do more than let the world see they love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and are heartily affected toward the good of all men? You must cause that men see it every where and in all things. You must endeavour always to speak and act like a Christian, and this from a real love of God and man; and, when you do so, you are in the high road of usefulness. If you *speak* like a Christian, your words will not be corrupt, but good to the use of edifying; and all with whom you converse may by the blessing of God be the better for you if they will; for it will not be your fault if you withhold not any thing from them wherein you can be profitable to them. If you *act* like a Christian, you will in every thing you do be reproving vice and recommending godliness. So that as the true servant of Christ does not understand God has given him grace merely for himself, but for the benefit of others, so his aim is to live, act, and speak continually in such manner as that others may be the better for him.—Thus in humility and an edifying conduct lies the duty of those who have received that best of all God's gifts, his sanctifying grace. You will judge for yourselves how far you have come short, and I hope the consideration of that will serve to make you more humble. On the other part,

Secondly.—How must others carry themselves toward such as are blessed with this best gift, *the grace of God*? The answer is, they must lovingly esteem them, and follow their example.—They must esteem and love them. This they ought to do, and this they

will certainly do, if they have any love towards God in them: for *Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him**. No man loves God for nothing; it is for the mercifulness, goodness, holiness, truth, and faithfulness we see to be in God, that we love him. And if we love these properties in God, when we see any of these things in men we cannot but love them too. It is impossible we should hate holiness in the child, if we love it in the father: if we hate men for their holiness, we do most certainly, though we see it not, hate God for his holiness; for *If we love not our brother whom we have seen, how can we love God whom we have not seen* †? Yet, notwithstanding this, our Lord has taught all his followers how little they must expect the love and esteem of the world for their piety and godliness. *Marvel not if the world hate you, you know it hated me before it hated you*: and then he adds the reason of this hatred of the world toward them, *If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you* ‡. Now therefore, brethren, have you loved or hated Christian godliness wherever you have seen it? Has your heart risen with delight or with disgust toward those who would not live as others do? Have you been ready to cover their infirmities, or sat as a spy upon them, to discover some flaw in their conduct for your own quiet's sake? Judge for yourselves; but,

* 1 John v. 1.

† iv. 20.

‡ John xv. 18, 19.

since the world began God never raised up a single man to himself, bestowing upon him the heavenly gift of true grace, but all graceless persons were immediately set against him, charging him with hypocrisy, ostentation, and what not? for no other reason than because he would serve the God of his fathers. The true cause of which has always been, that the venom of the serpent lies unmortified in such graceless persons, who cannot therefore endure the servants of God, and the followers of him who came to destroy the works of the devil. However, all those, who bear the image of God in their hearts and lives, ought for that reason to be esteemed and loved. And then also we must endeavour to follow them as far as they follow Christ. Has God sent light into the world merely to be looked at? No, but that we might be provoked thereby to good works. We should observe the conduct one of another, to imitate it; if we see in another a greater measure of humility, meekness, zeal, heavenly-mindedness, and deadness to the world, that he is striving more earnestly to enter in at the strait gate, this should provoke and stir us up, not to envy, but to follow such an one. It is a great aggravation of our sin that we are lazy and sit still, while we see others running in the race who have but the same helps that we have: and by so doing we disappoint God's design in setting the examples of others before us. The more shining example of my neighbour I should regard as God's call to me; and while I see such an one outstripping me, I should suppose God is saying to me by his good works, "Up, awake sleeper;

“ be doing, the time is at hand, the work is practicable,
“ the enemies of your soul may be vanquished, hea-
“ ven is set open, come, run, strive, enter, let no man
“ take thy crown.” And it is only so far as I hear
and obey this call that I honour and reverence the
grace of God in those whom God has distinguished
by it.

And thus now at last we are come to an end with
the fifth commandment, upon which I have insisted
the longer, both because it is least regarded, and also
demands a conduct that is most expressive of the
power of godliness. It is then Christ appears in his
glory upon earth, when he does influence and sway
our hearts to a religious observance of relative du-
ties. But, brethren, how sadly have we, do we, come
short! If after any commandment we have cause to
humble our souls and cry for mercy, pleading the
righteousness of Christ in our favour, it is after this.
And it will behove us to make diligent search here-
upon to prove and try ourselves, that we may sue out
the pardon in season, and obtain grace for the keeping
this law. Happy, yea, beyond expression blessed
shall we be, if when the Lord cometh he shall find
us so doing!

And now I dismiss these discourses on the law
for the present, having already much outrun my de-
sign of speaking to them only in Lent: but I thought
it unadvisable to stop in the midst of the social du-
ties. If God permit, we shall resume this subject
with the return of the year. But who knows what
may be in the counsels of God ere that time come?

where you or I may be? We know nothing of to-morrow; this day is only ours. Let us work then to-day, for we hasten to our end; we are passing off the stage, and doubtless many of us are at the very end of our part; perhaps I am speaking the last words of mine. If so, my last words are, "May the Lord Almighty
" bless you, direct you into all truth, and bring you
" to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."
Amen.

S E R M O N XLI.

GALATIANS iii. 24.

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

THE season * is now returned wherein we are to prosecute the explanation of the Ten Commandments in that view wherein the text doth partly at least represent the law; namely, a schoolmaster to make known our sins, and by the terror of its curse and scourge to drive us to Christ. The five first commandments have been fully spoken to; and I now go forward to open before you the sixth, *Thou shalt do no murder.*

There are two things you know in every commandment—something required, and something forbidden; and these two always contrary the one to the other; which do in such manner go together, that we cannot omit what a commandment requires but thereby we do what it forbids; or do what it forbids but we omit what it requires; as, if a man murders his neighbour, he not only does what this commandment forbids, but

* Preached at Truro, Feb. 26, 1758.

most manifestly slights all those duties of love and kindness it enjoins upon him. And so, on the other part, if he neglect to give of his ability to his distressed brother, as this law commands, he is therein guilty of that cruelty which it plainly forbids.—And further it must be observed, that as respective sins, according to the nature of the commandment, are forbidden, so to come short in any measure or thing of that duty which a commandment requires and enjoins is to be guilty of a trespass against it; so that as far, for example, as we come short of that love to others, both in temper and conduct, which this commandment directs, we are guilty of breaking it.—With these observations before us, let us now endeavour to lay open the sixth commandment for examination, *Thou shalt do no murder*. And it may be best understood and remembered when distributed under these three heads :—

First.—The *disposition of heart*.

Secondly.—The *speech*.

Thirdly.—The *conduct* it requires of us towards one another.

And, *first*, of the *disposition of heart* it enjoins us to bear one towards another. Thou shalt do no murder; that is, regarding the disposition of the heart, thou shalt neither bear an *envious, revengeful, nor cruel temper of mind* towards any of thy brethren; but exercise over them a complacential, meek, and compassionate disposition.

First.—Thou shalt not bear an *envious*, but thou shalt bear a *complacential spirit* towards others.—

Envy, strictly speaking, is that inward hatred of another for some good thing he has, which *we* have not, but wish for. Hence, according to the same strictness of speech, there is this difference to be observed between envy and jealousy (though they be both daughters of the same mother, *pride*), that hatred of those who have what we have not, but wish to have, is envy; hatred of those who, though they have not yet, seem in the way to have beyond us, is jealousy. But notwithstanding this be true in exact propriety of words, yet these two are to be understood in the Scripture to fall under the word envy, as indeed they do also in our common language. For the fact and nature of jealousy, you may find many instances of it in Scripture, such as Saul's hatred of David lest he should go beyond him in military reputation; and Haman's hatred of Mordecai, because he was advancing in the favour of King Ahasuerus; and Herod's and the chief priests' hatred of Christ, lest he should take from them their worldly greatness. But what need of Scripture-instances, when the world is every day so full of them; and when with our wretched hearts it is crime enough to incur dislike, that any are coming near us in the thing for which we are distinguished? Whose heart has not known jealousy; a secret rising of dislike, which, if unrestrained, has settled into hatred against those we feared were overtaking us? Indeed it cannot be otherwise, while we are proud of that, whatever it be, which distinguishes us; whether it be station, or wealth, or knowledge, or skill in a profession, or strength, or beauty, or even

dress, or (saddest of all) even gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit. And then for hatred of those who go beyond us in any thing; what a fearful instance have we thereof in Cain towards his own brother Abel? And what had poor Abel done? Just nothing, but that he was the better man of the two. That was fault enough with Cain's proud heart. *His countenance fell*, it is said; that is, envy might be seen in his countenance towards his brother; he could not endure the sight of him. And what was the issue? Why first he murders himself, as I may say, with spite and vexation; and then took an opportunity, when they were in the field together, to rise up against and slay his brother. And what is all envy but murder in the heart? And who is free from it? He knows little of himself who has not seen that his natural heart is ready enough to wish those, who stand in his way, out of his way at any rate. Horrid iniquity of fallen man! *What indeed is man, that he should be clean; and he that is born of a woman, that he should be righteous**? That inoffensive child Joseph, what was his fault? His father was fond of him; and therefore his brethren must hate him; envy lies rankling in their hearts, till they cast off all pity. Such is the real character of nature unrestrained, *hateful to and hating one another* †. This envy is a raging sin in the world. The effects of it are not always alike terrible; but the thing itself is beyond measure sinful; yet that man is stark blind who thinks he has never had any inclinations and

* Job xv. 14.

* Titus iii. 3.

stirrings of envy in his heart ; and he has been a godly man indeed who has at no time in any degree indulged them. Such are jealousy and envy, the daughters of pride ; you may easily know by their features that their father is no other than the devil.

But, should you be able to say you are free concerning envy, you may not therefore think you are quit of the demands of this law upon this head ; for it not only forbids that malignant spirit, but it does not permit you to be indifferent about the prosperity of your neighbour in soul and body ; it requires you to rejoice in it ; and that it is plain you do not, if you are only indifferent whether it goes well or ill with your neighbour. God has made us members one of another ; all one by nature, and he expects we should all be so by grace ; and therefore his will is, that we all love one another ; which doubtless we do not, if the prosperity of others gives us no pleasure. The main thing he would have us rejoice in concerning others is the prosperity of their souls, that with regard to godliness and glory they are in a thriving condition ; and also that our joy over them should be in proportion to the measure of grace and godliness we see in them ; and so, of course, the closer we see any walking after Christ, the better we should be pleased, and the more complacency we should take in them ; yea, when we see them much more distinguished Christians than ourselves. This the law requires. Judge you for yourselves whether you have not come short of it. But then also it reaches to the temporal conditions of our neighbours ; we must not regard their

worldly prosperity with an envious eye; but must rejoice therein as far as there is ground for doing so, that is, as far as we see grace along with prosperity to use it to God's glory: for otherwise prosperity is indeed a curse from God, and such a thing therefore as he who loves his neighbour's soul cannot rejoice in.—As we may not bear an envious, so neither,

Secondly, may we bear a *revengeful temper* towards any of our neighbours, but must be disposed in meekness of spirit toward all and every one of them. Here, whatever many may think of the littleness of such things, all causeless anger, and all that resentment which lies upon the heart concerning those we are displeased with, and most of all when it settles into malicious hatred against them, with wishes and contrivances of revenge in any sort or way; all these, being in their very nature selfish and devilish, are peremptorily condemned by this commandment. Christ explains it in this very manner himself, in order to shew us the abundance of our guilt; *I say unto you, Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause* (upon any selfish consideration) *shall be in danger of the judgment* *. And if so seemingly light a thing as hasty rash anger, which quickly passes away perhaps, makes us liable to the curse of the law, what shall we think of the matter when the injury really or supposedly received fixes an allowed distance, disgust, and resentment on the heart, at last settles into downright malice, and brings forth wishes and contri-

* Matt. v. 22.

vances of retaliation? You may see the whole of this in its true light in the conduct of Jacob's two sons, Simeon and Levi, towards the Shechemites, because of the injury done their sister Dinah*. First they fell into rash anger; it is said, *When the sons of Jacob heard of it, the men were grieved, and they were very wroth.* Wroth! you will say; why should they not? was there not a cause? No, not for such an anger as theirs, which was not so much for the dishonour done to God as for the affront put on themselves, as you may see by the last verse of the chapter, *Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?* There in the words *our sister* lay the grief; the honour of the family was stained; this shews plainly enough of what temper chiefly their anger was. And, O! with what a furious look and vehement tone, I warrant you, they spoke these words to their father! But it did not stop here. Their anger rested in their bosom, and settled in a fixed resentment; the scandal lay upon their minds, they could by no means reconcile themselves to put up the wrong: and, under this spirit, no one about them, I dare say, could have a good word or a kind look from them. At length Shechem's love to their sister gave them a fair opportunity of revenge. This was sweet to them. And now they could dissemble friendship, and lie, and make a cloak of religion to bring about their purpose; till, all things having answered their black designs, they took their swords, and without remorse or pity slew not only Shechem,

* Gen. xxxiv. 2.

but old Hamor his father, with all the males they could lay their hands upon. And then their brethren fell in also, and carried off, like a company of plunderers and robbers, all they could get. You see here a terrible instance of rash anger, of the horrid effects it will produce, and the great sin of not leaving vengeance unto God. How far any thing like this may have been our case, whether we have not been often guilty of rash and sinful anger, whether anger has not settled into resentment, and we have not meditated and taken revenge as far at least as the fear of punishment and the restraint of the laws of the land would permit us, I must leave every one to inquire for himself.—But lest any may think they have little or no blame on this head, because they are not of this hot passionate humour, and love to be quiet, and so for the sake of their own ease make no stir upon every trifle, we must consider that, by this commandment, those dispositions of mind towards others, which are the direct contraries to this angry, furious, revengeful spirit, and which fall under the general word meekness, are enjoined upon us.

As, *first*, We must bear a kind and courteous temper of heart towards others, as being members of ourselves; we and they being of one blood, and having the same Father; for which reason a man of *strife and debate, and that strikes with the fist of wickedness*, is said, by the Prophet Isaiah, *to hide himself from his own flesh* *. This temper is set out by St. Peter as

* Isaiah lviii. 4, 7.

that great ornament in wives which God makes much account of in them: but it is as true of their husbands, and of all men, as of them, that *The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price* *.

Secondly.—A disposition to construe every thing in the best part. To hope all things, even the best we can, and to see every thing in the most favourable light respecting all men, enemies as well as friends, is what this commandment requires of us. And surely it is but an ill token of true affection and love if we be waiting as it were to find fault, greedy to swallow the least accusation against another, ready to believe it, and forward to make the worst of it. This shews a malicious and revengeful spirit.

Thirdly.—Another part of this meekness is a forgiving temper. *Forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you* †; as much as to say, “No man can receive such injuries from another
“ as himself hath offered to and been forgiven by
“ God; and therefore God expects you should lay
“ aside all of you all thoughts of revenge, and forgive
“ one another from your hearts.” And let us remember there is no limitation to this command because of the greatness of the injury done us. Whatever it be, we must forgive it, and be ready in the sincerity of our hearts to return good for it, as if it had never been offered. He that cannot bring his heart to this, to forgive his enemy, and do him good, is a transgressor of this commandment, and liable to the fear-

* 1 Pet. iii. 4.

† Ephes. iv. 32.

ful judgment of God for the same ; as you may see in the parable recorded at the end of the eighteenth chapter of St. Matthew.

And, *Fourthly*.—A peaceable temper is another branch of meekness. We must be of that temper, as, *if it be possible, and as much as lieth in us, to live peaceably with all men* *. We must really desire to be at peace with all men, and use all honest endeavours actually to be so. We must do nothing, as far as we may avoid it, that will any way tend to open a breach, or to keep it open ; and, where it is once opened, we must not stand upon niceties, but give up any thing in our power to get it healed. *What care I for their displeasure ?* If they be angry, they must be pleased again. Shall I submit to such an one ? Such speeches are marks, however common, of a very ungentle and ungodly spirit.

But, *Thirdly*.—We may not be of a cruel, but must be of a compassionate, disposition. Not cruel either to our neighbours' souls or bodies. Not to their souls. There is nothing in which man can so nearly resemble the devil as by rejoicing at the fall and sin of another. Yet doubtless there were such at Corinth, whose cruelty herein set the Apostle upon putting them in mind of their great uncharitableness in so doing. *Charity*, saith he, *rejoiceth not in iniquity* † ; and therefore of what temper are some of you, who, envious of the religious attainments of others, are waiting for their halting, and ready to rejoice at it ;

* Rom. xii. 18.

† 1 Cor. xiii. 6.

yea, and that so much the more as they have been eminent in their profession? Then again, as we may not rejoice in others' sins, so may we not lead any into sin; as those do who take pleasure in making others drunk, or in putting them upon any kind of wickedness. Nor may we make a mock at sin in others, turning it into a laughing matter; for this tends to harden them, and shews much cruelty toward their souls in our hearts. Nor, finally, may we encourage any sin by our example and conduct, as not concerned what influence our behaviour may have upon them, so we seem to keep ourselves unhurt. These, and the like, are great marks of a cruel merciless disposition towards the souls of others, and high provocations against God; whose will is that we should be of the very contrary temper, tenderly affectioned to each others' souls. He condemns a careless indifference about the salvation and spiritual estate of our neighbours, as though we should say, What care I what becomes of my neighbours, so I myself get safe to heaven? Truly this is not the way thither. God will have us to compassionate poor sinners, to mourn and weep for them, and be ready to do every thing we can for their good. This was Christ's spirit; he mourned in the very bottom of his heart for sinners, he wept over lost Jerusalem, and was ready to suffer any thing for our souls' sake. And, as far as we have come short of his temper, we have transgressed this commandment. And then, as to men's temporal concerns, all merciless rejoicing over, yea, and indifference to

their afflictions, whether in body or estate, is here condemned. Self-love and worldly interest are ready to beget this spirit of cruelty in us. You see how they did it in wicked Herod respecting the poor infants * ; and in the priest and Levite in the case of the wounded traveller † ; and we may see the like effects of them upon the hearts of the covetous every day. O what an unfeeling, cruel, tyrannical, oppressive temper, doth there arise out of the love of money, and the lust of power ! how has this temper raged through the world, destroyed the inhabitants thereof, and shut out pity and compassion towards any objects of misery ! in greater or less degree it is probable it has infected us all : for have we always, and as we ought, pitied the poor ; mourned with the afflicted ; felt for the oppressed orphan and widow, and delivered them as we might out of the hand of the oppressor ? As members of the same body, have we been afflicted with the sons and daughters of Sorrow, and ready to comfort them with our words, liberalities, and prayers ? Yet this is compassion ; and, by failing in any part of the whole extent thereof, we have trespassed against this holy law of God.

And so much for the disposition of heart required by this commandment ; of which I have spoken thus largely because the life and spirit of this law lies herein ; and because, if we are tolerably free from outward gross acts of envy, revenge, and cruelty, we

* Mat. ii. 1—16.

† Luke x. 30, 31.

are apt to imagine this commandment has no charge of guilt against us. A short word will be sufficient upon each of the other two heads; and therefore I have only to observe on the

Second head, that we must indulge and gratify neither envy, revenge, nor cruelty, in our tongues; but, from a real affection one towards another, our words must be charitable and kind. Yet when envy, resentment, or unmercifulness, are in the heart, how impossible is it to confine the tongue! Consider, now, how have you spoken of those your heart disliked, because they were more eminent than yourself in wealth, skill, or piety; in short, of those who stood in your way? What! was there never any bitterness upon your tongue, nothing of the poison of asps under your lips, no words tending needlessly to lessen them, no artful insinuation of their defect? Yet all these were envious speeches. Or again, did your tongue never transgress the bounds of meekness in speaking of those who had injured you in deed, or you thought had done so? What! at no time did you use any contemptuous words to them, or reproachful words of them, by complaining to any one you met how ill they had used you, and how abominable they were? Has your tongue, I say, never been set on fire by the hell of resentment and revenge, and been employed in doing mischief to an enemy? Or, finally, have your words been ever free of cruelty and full of mercy? You know how Shimei cursed David in distress*: and

* 2 Sam. xvi. 5, 7, 8.

did you never speak a disdainful word to your brother in the day of his trouble? The Pharisees looking on Jesus hanging on the cross wagged their heads, and said, *Ah! thou**: and did you never shake your head at a brother fallen from prosperity, or cry *Ah! thou; pride will have a fall*; or by any cruel word add reproach to affliction? O how gracious were all the words that proceeded out of the mouth of Jesus! Shew me one envious, revengeful, cruel word, in all that he spoke! Upon his tongue was the law of kindness, because on his heart was the law of love. We have all need to be ashamed, remembering how little we have taken heed to our ways, not to commit murder against our brother with our tongue.

The *third* thing was our conduct. Thou shalt not do any damage to thy brother in soul or body, but shalt do him all the good thou canst in both. You say, I never murdered any one, I never took away the life of my neighbour; but have you been no striker? God allows not that; he says, *Vengeance is mine*. But did you never do damage to other people's souls? Have you never put them upon sin? or, if not, have you never led them into or encouraged them in sin? Here we are all guilty; we have all led others into sin, whether we designed it or no, and that by our example; yea, and I am sure we have encouraged them in sin by not setting our whole influence against it. And this who will say he has done? who will say he has done what he might for the help of

* Mark xv. 29.

poor sinners, and for the establishment of such as are seeking God? What minister, what magistrate, what parent, what master, what man of wealth, what man of knowledge, will say this? Sirs, the charge of murdering souls lies against us all. The Lord give us grace to repent it heartily! The Lord deliver us from this blood-guiltiness! The Lord enable us to do good, to the souls one of another, according to our power, the rest of our days!

I have only to observe, further, that the law, *Thou shalt do no murder*, is expressed in such general terms, as plainly to prohibit our doing any hurt to ourselves in body or soul, and to enjoin the taking all due care of the one and the other. Our souls and bodies are God's; therefore we must neglect neither, nor can we do damage to either of them without incurring the curse of God. And, if so, what shall become of those worst of murderers, those who murder themselves, those who murder their souls and bodies too, those who are doing this continually for years together? And yet this is most evidently the case of all drunkards especially, of all gluttons, and also of fornicators and whoremongers for the most part.—But if you would hear more on this head, I must refer you to the catechising in the evening, when what you have now heard will be illustrated and improved.

SERMON XLII.

GALATIANS iii. 24.

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

WHILE our conduct has been brought under examination by the law of God; and while, in passing from one commandment to another, we are found guilty of every one of them; whence is it that we are so little moved at the sight of what we have done, so little concerned about the curse threatened against us for our transgressions, and that the publican's cry*, so exactly fitted to our case, rises so coldly on our hearts? Jesus sits at the right hand of God; from that exalted place he looks down upon us; seated in glory he lifts up his voice, "Come, sinners, come to me and be saved; guilty, condemned, perishing sinners, come to me. My blood shall cleanse you from all your sins, your sins shall not be your destruction; come to me and live." Thus Jesus invites. But how is it that we are so slow of coming? Is there no certainty in God's law, no reality that we have broken it, or nothing terrible in the curse it threatens

* Luke xviii. 13.

us with? Alas! all these are certain, real, and terrible: but our hearts, our stubborn hearts! there lies the mischief. Neither the terrors of Sinai nor the more moving language of Calvary, neither judgment nor mercy, neither death nor life, neither hell nor heaven will move them, or move them but a little. We have been already condemned in our own consciences by six of God's commandments: but are we fled for refuge to Jesus from the storm of God's wrath? Yea, are we all come nearer to him in the increasing sight of our vileness? Then my labour has not been in vain. But, if not; if our iniquity has not found us out, and we are still insensible to our misery, and unsolicitous about God's mercy; how is our guilt increased by so much fruitless pains used upon us! how can we answer it now to our own consciences! how shall we answer it to Jesus when he comes in his glory! We should seriously consider, that sin committed, how long soever ago, is guilt contracted; that guilt contracted is punishment insured; that punishment insured will never be remitted but only by the mercy of God in the merits of a Redeemer; and that mercy will never be ours unless we humbly, heartily, and penitently sue for it. You see the use we should make of the commandments. I pray you set yourselves thus to improve them. May the Lord so bless what I am now to say on the seventh commandment to all your souls.

As we are men, and so the one part of our composition is body, we have all animal desires and appetites in common with other sensitive creatures; hun-

ger, thirst, and the like, are common to us with all the animal world. But then, seeing we are reasonable beings also, and should be religious, God will have these animal appetites kept in due subjection, and directed according to the measures he has prescribed for that purpose: that is to say, no animal appetite must be allowed to usurp a place that does not belong to it, by engrossing the heart, and taking to itself the direction of our minds and wills; but must be kept within such bounds, and ordered by such rules, as God has set it. When thus kept in subjection and thus ordered, as it has nothing sinful in itself, being purely animal, so it will answer the great purpose of preservation for which God designed it. And this is the rule of duty regarding the natural appetites of hunger and thirst. Meat and drink must be used for preservation, and therefore the natural desire of them must be kept within the bounds of a sober moderation. To delight the soul in the expectation of them and to use them with excess, is intemperance. And so it is regarding that animal appetite more specially designed in this commandment. When indulged in the heart with delight it becomes a sinful lust; and, when gratified out of the bounds God has prescribed to it, it becomes a sinful act, varying according to the nature of the act itself, as committed with others or with our own bodies only, and so called fornication, adultery, self-pollution, and other abominable names, which I care not to mention. Hunger is no excuse for gluttony, nor thirst for drunkenness; no more is that other animal appetite

for lust and uncleanness: gluttony, drunkenness, lust, are first in the heart; there they defile the soul, and turn the reasonable man into a very animal; and from the heart they come out in such various acts as respectively belong to each of them.

What has been said may serve to shew that the general design of the commandment is to keep our bodies in a due state of subjection to our spirits: and therefore that there are these two great duties enjoined upon us by it, *chastity* and *temperance*.

First.—It requires us to be chaste: now, from what was just above advanced, you understand there is an inward and outward chastity.

Inward chastity is keeping the heart for God, not suffering it to be defiled by any unchaste and filthy delights. *Whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart**, is Christ's interpretation of the spiritual meaning of this commandment. And what he says of looking upon a woman to lust after her must be extended to all manner of unclean desires. We must harbour no such guests. Whenever we do, we hurt our own souls, and sin against God. Every indulgence of this kind is a sin.—But then how much more when these are formed into habits, and lewdness is the very character of the soul, takes fire at every object, is entertained and even courted, and speaks at every look; when, as the Scripture expresses it, it appears *with a whore's forehead, and eyes*

* Matt. v. 28.

full of adultery? What a ghastly creature then! how deformed in the sight of man and God!—Chastity must reign upon our hearts; heaven-born Chastity, the daughter of divine Love; and her child Modesty must be with her; Modesty, harmless in look, decent in apparel, reserved in gesture, innocent in words, her face apt to blush, and her back turned upon every appearance of indecency.

Chastity is also *outward*, expressive of that purity of heart which lodges within. The hand, the tongue, the eye, every member of the body, must be kept pure: and accordingly all kind of actions, which are in any degree contrary hereto, are absolutely condemned. *It is a shame*, saith our Apostle, *even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret* *. But he had before said what kind of things they were, *Fornication, and all uncleanness, let it not be once named amongst you, as becometh saints. Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God* †. Most peremptorily every act of uncleanness is condemned; I refer the parties concerned to the particulars, being both ashamed, and also holding it improper, to speak of them. Only, considering the importance and need there is in this our day of the alarming remark, I would observe concerning fornication and adultery, that they are sins which damn

* Ephes. v. 12.

† v. 4, 5.

two souls at once; and yet that self-uncleanness is held by divines to be a greater sin than either of them.

Secondly.—Temperance is the other duty required by this commandment. By temperance is meant an holy moderation concerning meat, drink, sleep, and relaxation. Now intemperance is here forbidden in a double respect, both as it is an indulgence of the body; and as, by being so, it ministers occasion to, and nourishes lust.

First.—Intemperance is prohibited for its own sake. The heart must not be in any of these things to delight in them, nor the body be indulged in them. You may not set your heart upon eating, be nice and curious about it, nor eat beyond the refreshment of nature; this is gluttony: and I am sure the Scriptures rank gluttony and drunkenness in the same degree of sinfulness, however we may have learnt to do otherwise. You may not set your heart upon drink, nor use it to excess: if you do you are a drunkard. And take it with you, that God will judge whether you have loved or indulged in drink by his reckoning, not yours. You may not fancy it to be no sin to love your pillow, and to indulge yourself there, when God would have you up to pray and labour. You may not set your heart on relaxations; as far as you do, *You are a lover of pleasures, more than a lover of God**; and if you give yourself up to them, squander your time upon them, and lose your-

* 2 Tim. iii. 4.

self in them, though man may not condemn you for it, yet assuredly God will. These, gluttony, drunkenness, sloth, and idleness, are bodily indulgences, and absolutely forbidden. They set the body above the soul; and turn the man into an animal. For what need of being a reasonable creature, to eat, and drink, and sleep, and be idle? The beast of the field can do this as well as we. Questionless, God has given us a reasonable soul for higher purposes; and doubtless he expects a better account from us of the use we have made of that noble distinction than to have levelled ourselves with the brutes. Could a brute speak, would it be any other language than this, *Let us eat and drink, and be merry?* Alas! that ever this should be the language of reasonable man! that so many of mankind should have lost the thought and inclination of speaking any other!

But, *Secondly*.—Intemperance is not only prohibited as it is sinful in itself, but also as it gives occasion to and nourishes lust. And this a life of indulgence does: it is the very food of lust. The grievous sin of Sodom is ascribed to this very cause in the Prophet Ezekiel. *Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom. Pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness, was in her and in her daughters. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me**. And Jeremiah speaks in the very same manner of the Jews. *When I had fed them to the full, then they committed adultery, and assembled*

* Ezekiel xvi. 49, 50.

themselves by troops in the harlots' houses. They were as fed horses in the morning, (what can so strongly represent a body pampered with indulgence? the consequence follows,) *every one neighed after his neighbour's wife* *. Thus lust is the effect of a body gratified in meat, drink, sloth, and idleness.—Yea, and if we consider only either of these separately, we may find Scripture instances of horrible lusts committed under the influence of each of them. Thus what made the Sodomites so wanton but fulness of bread? That is, their delicate living and high feeding. What made Lot commit such dreadful incest with his own daughters but *drunkenness* †? Or what filled David, or his son Amnon after him, with so much lust, but a *fit* of sloth and idleness ‡? The case of Amnon is very particular. In the heat of his youth, and no doubt in the abundance of sloth and idleness also, being the king's son, he was fallen in love with Tamar, his brother Absalom's sister. Instead of taking any methods of self-denial, it is said, *he was so vexed, that he fell sick for his sister Tamar*; that is, he gave way to the passion, and let it occupy his whole soul, leaving no room for other employment. Sloth now and idleness had their full power; and his unclean desires grew to such a head, that he is ready to sacrifice every thing to his inclination. He readily complies with the wicked counsel of his friend Jonadab. He lays himself down on his bed, and feigns himself sick; his father comes to see him; it is his father must

* Jer. v. 7, 8. † Gen. xix. 31—36. ‡ 2 Sam. xi. 2.—xiii. 1—14.

send his own daughter and Amnon's own sister to be sacrificed to his passion; and, while she is affectionately doing him the kindest offices, he takes advantage of them to ruin her. What a scene of villany, hypocrisy, and ingratitude, was here! Was there ever a more dreadful scene acted? It cost him his life quickly after: but he was so under the absolute dominion, so under the raging influence of passion, that he considered no consequences; and lust made him set no value upon (I do not say his conscience, for it is plain he had none, but) his honour and his life. And now, after such instances, we may cry, if we will, what harm is there in living high, in taking a glass, and following indolence, ease, and pleasures, so one can afford such things? Why, if there were not, which yet there is, any sin in such indulgences, separately and in themselves considered, yet you see what provocatives they are to lust: and so I doubt not all have found them who have given themselves to them.

And therefore this commandment, which regards chastity, does enjoin us all such means as serve to restrain lust; and these are the contraries of this gluttony, drunkenness, sloth, and idleness, by which it is promoted. *I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection**, saith St. Paul. Well, and how did he do this? What, by faring sumptuously, and drinking plentifully, living at his ease, and doing little or nothing? No. We hear nothing of his feastings, but he tells us, *He was in fastings often*. He tells us, *He*

* 1 Cor. ix. 27.

suffered much hunger and thirst, that he was in labours more abundant, and knew what it was to undergo weariness and painfulness, cold and nakedness*. By such a life as this it was he kept under his body, and brought it into subjection. And you see the will of God is, that, in order to our purity in heart and life, we should,

First.—Be moderate in the use of meats and drinks, and, as need is, give ourselves to fasting and abstinence. We must learn and practise the lesson of *putting the knife to our throat, if we be given to appetite* †. The meaning is, we must not indulge our palates in the quantity or variety of the things set before us; but always use such a moderation as rather to keep on the side of too little than run any hazard of too much. Nor must we always eat even what nature requires, but abstain at proper seasons, for the better keeping the body in subjection to the spirit. Fasting is most certainly recommended in Scripture, but just as prayer is to be used, as need requires and discretion directs. You observe I am not speaking of more solemn fasts enjoined by authority, but of private ones recommended by the example of Scripture saints, and called for by the necessities of our own souls. If you will not submit to this moderation and abstinence, do not wonder if you cannot preserve the chastity of your heart or life.

Secondly.—Be diligent in your calling. Labour keeps the mind employed, and the body under;

* 2 Cor. xi. 23—27.

† Prov. xxiii. 2.

whereas sloth both genders lust, and gives it opportunity. If you are idle, the flesh will be busy; and how fair an occasion do you give it by having nothing else to do but to attend upon it! If you will be crying upon your bed, *A little more sleep, a little more slumber*; if you will put your hands in your bosom instead of putting them to your work; if you see a lion in your shop*, and cannot endure to be in it; what advantage could lust desire, which you do not yield to it? You must not be idle; we must be all employed; God has work for us all in the world, and indeed the most for those who seem to have the least to do. Application must both keep under the body and find engagement for the soul. And this will go a great way towards preserving chastity.

And, *lastly*, we must be aware of the recreations we use, and how we use them. They must be innocent in themselves (and that many of them are not), else they are both a sin and a snare. It has been supposed that, when *Dinah went to see* (that is, to visit) *the daughters of the land*†, she went upon an unwarrantable errand. Probably she was mixed with them in their idolatrous sports and dances, when Shechem took her, and lay with her.—Nor must relaxations only be in themselves innocent, they must be also used innocently, if we mean not to be hurt by them. We are not to go to them in an unguarded frame, or forget ourselves in them, for then we lay ourselves open to temptation; and we must not give

* Prov. xxvi. 13.

† Gen. xxxiv. 1.

that time to them which is owing to more important employments, for then they are in truth direct bodily indulgences; and so it can be no wonder if they give occasion to lust.

I thought these hints concerning the means of chastity, arising from the head of temperance, to be no improper conclusion of a discourse on the seventh commandment. In speaking to which you will easily see, that, because of the delicacy of the subject, many things of the chiefest importance, and which are most signally aimed at by this law, have been but glanced upon by the way, and left to every one's own more retired and deliberate reflection. The spirituality of this commandment has, I hope, been made plain; and is now submitted to your serious consideration. May the Lord in mercy bless it to us all, for Jesus Christ's sake!

S E R M O N X L I I I .

GALATIANS iii. 24.

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

SIN is the transgression of the law*. And if every transgression of the law be a sin, whence comes it, that, while our sins are so many, our apprehensions are so slight? Some indeed tremble; neither does all their frequent hearing of the merit of a Redeemer's blood still the clamour of their consciences. But others, the most, sin and fear not; not all the terrors of Sinai move them, though all those terrors be actually thundering against them. And how dreadful are they! Let the manner of giving the law speak, though it can but faintly figure the terrors of the wrath of an avenging God. "Be ready (said the Lord) against the third day, for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people. Set bounds unto the people; say to them, Take heed, go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall

* 1 John iii. 4.

“ be surely put to death ; whether it be beast or man ;
“ it shall not live : when the trumpet soundeth long,
“ they shall come up to the mount.—And it came to
“ pass on the third day in the morning, that there
“ were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud ;
“ upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet
“ exceeding loud ; so that all the people that were in
“ the camp trembled.—And Moses brought forth
“ the people out of the camp to meet God.—And
“ Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord
“ descended upon it in fire : and the smoke thereof
“ ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole
“ mount quaked greatly.—And when the voice of the
“ trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and loud-
“ er, Moses spake, and God answered him by a
“ voice.—And God came down on Mount Sinai on
“ the top of the mount. And all the people saw the
“ thunderings and the lightnings, and the noise of the
“ trumpet, and the mountain smoking ; and when
“ the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar
“ off.—And said, Let not God speak with us, lest
“ we die.—And God spake all these words, saying,
“ I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee
“ out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bond-
“ age*.” Thus God appeared terrible in giving the
law : what will the terrors be, when he shall come to
avenge himself of the transgressors of it ? What will
be the terrors of a judgment-day, a day of recom-

* Exod. xix. and xx.

pense, whereof God himself had said, *Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven**? O sinners, our God is a consuming fire: and who of you will be able to stand when he appeareth? Now is the day of salvation. Death hasteneth; then your day is over. Humble yourselves. Come to Jesus. Live.

I am now to explain to you the eighth commandment, *Thou shalt not steal*.

The great duty required by this commandment is contentedness, and the great sin forbidden is covetousness. God will have us, as those who depend on him, and live entirely by his bounty, to be content with such things as we have, because they are, be they more or less, what he gives us, and judges fittest to bestow on us. He will have us trust in him for our daily bread, and all the blessings of life; and reckons it a great dishonour done him when we are careful and anxious for the things we really need, and much more when we set ourselves to desire the things we need not. Take notice, therefore, that contentment is being quiet and satisfied with God's care of us in worldly things, cheerfully using what he gives us to-day, and nothing doubting he will provide for us to-morrow, in the way of our duty and diligent labour in our calling. As far as we fail of this quiet satisfiedness in God's fatherly care of us, are afraid to use what he gives us, or anxious about the morrow, we come sinfully short of contentedness, and are guilty

* Heb. xii. 26.

of covetousness. The nature of which sin of covetousness lies therefore in these two things:—

First.—An unbelieving distrust of God concerning those things of the world which we really need for ourselves and families. It is a great sin against God to question his blessing upon our honest labour. It both denies that he orders all things by his wise and good providence, and also flatly gives the lie to his plainest promises. God will bless the honest labours of such as trust in him: and such do believe that what he sends is best for them, be it little or much.

Secondly.—The other ingredient in covetousness is carnal desire, putting us a lusting after the things we really need not; whether pride, hungering after worldly wealth, because of the present honour that attends the possessor of it, or love of indulgence, that desires to have wherewith to gratify its lusts.—These two are the first principles of covetousness; and, would you trace up any covetous desire to its fountain-head, you should find it arose either from an unbelieving mistrust of God for what was necessary, or from a carnal desire of what was not so. Both the one and the other of which are theft in the sight of God, and that *love of money which, he assures us, is the root of all evil**. Let this suffice for the inward disposition required or condemned by this commandment; in which, as far as we are wanting, we shall also be likely to transgress in the outward duties enjoined upon us, and be found in the practice of *injustice, niggardli-*

* 1 Tim. vi. 10.

ness, and *wastefulness*, which three include all manner of stealing.

The *first* outward sin here forbidden is injustice, to which we shall be sadly pushed by covetousness, if it be in our hearts, whether it arise from a distrust of God's providence regarding the things we really need, or from the insatiable desires begotten in us by the pride of life and the lust of indulgence, after the things we really do not need. And here I must proclaim aloud against that worldly maxim, *Sell as dear and buy as cheap as you can*, as absolutely dishonest; being most directly contrary to that rule of our Lord's, *Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do unto them*. God does not admit that as a good character, "to be a man of sharpness in business;" which, if I understand it right, is to have the wit of outwitting others. There is a market-price in all traffic, and that every man ought contentedly to take or give. But to buy as cheap and sell as dear as I can, is to take the liberty of availing myself of another's ignorance or necessity; which is a treatment I should not like toward myself. As far therefore as any, either in the whole or part of their dealings with others, have acted upon this wicked maxim, however they may be esteemed honest in the sight of men, they are accounted no better nor other than downright thieves in the sight of God: and however good they may have boasted themselves to have been in making a bargain in this world, unless they repent, they will find they have made a very bad one another day. God judgeth not as man judgeth: and there-

fore consider as before him how you have dealt with others in the traffic you have had with them; whether a desire of gain has not made you step aside from plain honesty in *buying* or *selling*. In *buying*, by undervaluing and running down the goods you would purchase, *It is naught, it is naught* *. By availing yourself of the ignorance of the seller; or, worse than either, by taking hold of another's necessity, and, because he must sell, therefore forgetting what charity and compassion would easily dictate in such a case, and giving him perhaps not half the worth of the goods you take from him. And then, in *selling*, inquire again whether you have not knowingly overrated your goods; or concealed artfully some defect or blemish you knew to be in them, parting with them at a price they had been only worth had they been sound; or raising upon an ignorant purchaser what you had been obliged to abate to a crafty one; or if one wanting your goods *must* have them, therefore being sure "to make him pay for them," as we say. It were endless to mention all the tricking and dishonest practices that may have been used in selling: one however must not be omitted, because generally complained of, whether upon just grounds I neither know nor do allow myself to think; the persons concerned in selling must look to it. It is this, the not having weights and measures at all times statuteable and equal. It is the seller's business in conscience to see carefully and constantly

* Prov. xx. 14.

that they are so; which if he does not do, he cannot possibly be excused by an ignorance (supposing him ignorant) easily avoidable, and therefore wilful: but the truth generally is, there is real covetousness, and in consequence thereof knavery in the disposition; and the ignorance is, to beguile conscience, merely affected and pretended.

As we may be dishonest in buying and selling, so also in borrowing and lending. If a man borrows without design of paying, the whole world pronounces him a cheat. But doth it do so if he borrow when he has no prospect of paying? And yet at bottom this is little better than the other; he would not choose to be so dealt with himself; and, for any thing he can foresee, he is as likely to deceive his neighbour, and disappoint him of the thing lent, as if he had no design to repay it. But what should he have done? he will say. He was in necessity. Then he should have begged, not borrowed, and in so doing he would have acted honestly. On the other part, a lender may be as dishonest as a borrower; he may exact unreasonable profit for what he lends, whether money or other things; or he may injure or destroy what is put in his hands as a security, whether estate, house, or lesser thing; or may oppressively detain to his own use what is so deposited, not caring to part with it again, though all proper satisfaction is already made, or is offered to be made.

Also in hiring and labouring for hire we may be dishonest. God does not allow those who hire to drive unreasonable bargains with labourers, beneath

what their work is worth ; nor to delay paying them ; nor to detain any part of what was their due ; nor to force a profit out of them at second hand, by obliging them, contrary to their inclinations, to take in goods what is owing to them in money, and so artfully and cruelly squeezing out of them a sixth, it may be a fifth, part of their wages.—No more must they who are hired defraud those who hire them, which they may do by more ways than any one can tell but themselves. They defraud their master when they are idle and slothful, squandering the time for which they are paid ; and so they do when they are careless, and do not their work to their best skill and ability ; and so also when they spoil and consume what is given them to work with ; and so, finally, when they take any part of it to their own use, or give it to others without their masters' knowledge.

I have dwelt, you find, upon such things as do not pass for great matters in the eye of the world, but are coloured with some show of pretence for them, or do not come within the lash of the law, or by custom are accounted no great scandal, and such as may comport with the character of an honest man. Waving therefore to insist, that plain theft, violent robbery, insolent oppression of such as have no helper, are acts of dishonesty ; I only add further upon this head, that we may steal from many as well as from one ; and therefore that it is just as much theft to cheat the country as it is to defraud a particular man ; so that all withholding of custom and tribute, and all buying or selling uncustomed goods, falls under the

prohibition of this law. The ground of such practices is covetousness, the practices themselves *theft*.

And now, to end this head, if any be found to have defrauded another, or to have in his hand any thing which he knows belongs to his neighbour, whether he is the original defrauder or not, he is required by this commandment to restore it. It is as much dishonesty and injustice to keep what is another's as to take it from him. He must make restitution. Nay, he must not delay to do it; for, should he restore it at last, he is actually defrauding his neighbour of the use and benefit of it every day he keeps it. But perhaps the fraud has been such that he cannot know whom he has injured, or those are dead to whom the right belongs; and therefore how can he make restitution? Why, he may not keep that which is not his own at any rate. Is the person dead to whom it is due? Let his representatives have it: for it is theirs. Does not a man know to whom he has been injurious? Then it falls of right to the poor; and these we have always with us.—And thus much of injustice.

The *second* sin forbidden is niggardliness. This is the contrary to liberality, and is that sad and sinful state of soul when a man has neither an heart to use nor to give, and so robs himself and the needy. There is not a vice in the world more cried out upon; and yet, if we may believe Solomon, there is none more common. *There is an evil, which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men: a man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet*

*God giveth him not power to eat thereof**. Well, but however common, what niggardly man ever owned that he was so? It is a sin, it seems, that hides itself from our eyes, and never wants the false but fair show of prudence to cloak itself under. So that peradventure it may be your sin or mine, while we suspect nothing of the matter; we may be penuriously robbing ourselves and others, and at the same time be admiring at the close-fistedness of this person and that. We shall all therefore do well to look at home; and I suppose we may find some degree or other of it cleaving to us. Sure I am he only is in any sort safe from its dominion over him, who sees and contends against it. The marks of it may be such as these:—

First.—Much anxiety and carefulness about increasing in wealth, so that the thoughts are all intent upon it, with a certain eagerness of growing up to more than one has yet attained to.

Secondly.—Importunate solicitude about the success of worldly schemes, so that they follow us all the day; we only forget them as we fall asleep, and they present themselves to us the very moment we awake.

Thirdly.—An over-joyfulness of heart, when our schemes prosper, and we find things answering our expectations. Along with these,

Fourthly.—A secret uncomfortable discontent of spirit, when we meet with disappointment, and our designs do not succeed.

* Eccles. vi. 1, 2.

And, *Fifthly*.—When it cheers our hearts to receive, but our countenances fall if we are to pay. This is a sure mark of a niggard. And so is,

Sixthly.—An over-carefulness about saving, perpetual plotting and contriving to pinch a little from this and a little from that, and when it goes to a man's heart to think how much is going away. And, most of all,

Seventhly.—When we have forgotten that the use of money is to live comfortably ourselves, and to distribute largely to others. I say, when we have forgotten the use of money; for covetousness shall so blind a man, that he shall never once reflect why money was given him.

And, *Eighthly*.—When, whatever a man gives, his heart draws back from doing it. When he gives for very shame, to save his character; and would never think of giving at all, could he handsomely avoid it; and being engaged in a charitable undertaking, he presently repents, and is seeking a pretence to disengage himself from it.—By such marks as these we may discover niggardliness. But you will say, if you are of such a stamp as this, you are encouraging extravagance. No,

Thirdly.—Wastefulness is a sin also forbidden by this commandment. I am well aware, that the prodigal person, upon hearing the character of the niggard, will be ready to boast, and to declare that he hates a niggard from the bottom of his soul. Well, but he considers not that he also is a thief. Wastefulness is theft as well as niggardliness. Thus,

First.—He that will waste his substance in eating

and drinking, live above his ability, and spend with those that are better able than he, is but a thief; he robs his family, and brings poverty on himself. Such an one may be esteemed by his companions, and reckoned the most honest and best-natured man in the world: but sure I am in God's reckoning he has a very ill character, *he is a thief*, he steals from his own, yea, from his own house what they at home should live upon, and is worse than an infidel.

So, *Secondly*, They who lay out all their substance on their back, dress beyond what they can afford, and will needs make a fine appearance whatever it cost them, are miserable thieves; they rob the poor, leave them naked and starving, that themselves may appear to be something. Nay, they rob themselves; and so bring on penury and want where God sends none. It is easy to see this prodigal humour will more effectually reduce any one than a thief could do by picking the pocket; that might be but once or seldom, but this a perpetual drain.

So, *Thirdly*, Gamesters are but thieves, whether they lose or win. Does he lose? He steals from himself and family. But he gains perhaps? Why, then, he only robs another and his family. But will it be said he gained it fairly? No such matter. It was coveting that which was another man's that set him to game; and there is one robbery, namely, in the heart. And then he took an unlawful means of getting, for God has appointed no such kind of traffic; and to take from another without God's warrant cannot be honest.

And, *Fourthly*, He that prodigally wastes his substance in pleasures does but rob himself, his family, and the poor. And there are many such wasters now-a-days, who think nothing too much to spend on their pleasures, and will put every thing to stake, so their inclinations this way may be indulged. No wonder therefore if that be now seen true, which was so in Solomon's time, *He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man* *. If a man will be continually robbing his own pocket, no wonder if at last he find nothing there.

Also, *lastly*, Idleness is a sinful waster, that preys upon a man's substance till he has nothing left. *An idle soul shall suffer hunger, and drowsiness shall be clothed with rags* †. Idleness is a companion that is the worst of thieves. Whatever a man has, it strips him bare, and fills his house with distress and calamity. *Poverty comes upon the sluggard like an armed man* ‡; it arrests, and turns him out of house and home. Should a neighbour do that which idleness doth, you would challenge him for a notorious thief and robber. But I cannot stay to enlarge.

You may see now how little reason many who cry out upon niggardliness have really to do so, since themselves are guilty another way of breaking the same commandment. And you cannot but observe, how both the one and the other of these, niggardliness and wastefulness, are grievous temptations to dishonesty, the former by imagining necessity, the latter by begetting it.—And thus much of the eighth commandment.

* Prov. xxi. 17. † xix. 15.—xxiii. 21. ‡ vi. 9, 11.

SERMON XLIV.

GALATIANS iii. 24.

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

WHILE I go forward explaining the commandments, it is possible one and another may be ready to complain of the law as too strict, or of me as explaining it beyond its real meaning. For the latter complaint, I refer to Christ's own explanation of the law in his sermon on the mount: but the former has its foundation in ignorance of the design of the law; which is to make us know our sins, and thereby the misery of our state; with this gracious purpose, that we may come to Christ for deliverance from our guilt and the punishment we deserve; and so may without fear serve God and keep his commandments *sincerely*, while daily experience shews us we cannot do it *perfectly*. We must learn therefore to make a right use of the law.

First.—To understand it in its full extent.

Secondly.—To apply it to our hearts and ways for the discovery of what we are and have done; and then,

Thirdly.—To sue for mercy for Christ's sake, be-

cause of our transgressions against it, and to set ourselves cheerfully to walk according to it by the grace of God as nearly as we can. With these purposes let us hear now what the ninth commandment has against us, *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.*

In order to fix the true design of this commandment, it must be observed, that false witnessing in the highest sense is upon oath, when appeal is made to God for the truth of what we declare. Now in such false witnessing there are always three commandments expressly broken; the third commandment by calling God to witness what is false, and therein lies the perjury of false witness; then, secondly, a monstrous injury offered to our neighbour's life or estate, in breach of the sixth or eighth commandment, as the case is, in capital cases of both; and then, thirdly, a wrong done to our brother's character, which is properly the sin against this ninth commandment. From hence it appears, that although false witnessing upon oath doth indeed fall under this commandment, yet it only doth so as far as our neighbour's character is concerned therein; God's honour and man's life or property having been before secured and provided for. And so the purpose of the ninth commandment is evidently this, to preserve the character of our neighbour. And it has two branches:—

First.—That as far as we can we must preserve a good opinion of our neighbour in our own hearts.

Secondly.—That according to our power we must maintain his character in the world.

First.—As far as we can we must preserve a good opinion of our neighbour in our hearts. And therefore these three things fall evidently under the censure of this commandment:—1. A censorious disposition. 2. Rash judging. 3. And a willingness to hear of the faults of others. Which three are so connected together, that there is no dividing them. A censorious temper unavoidably begets hard judging, and pleasure in hearing the faults of others; while these plainly prove a censorious disposition, which is most absolutely contrary to the main purpose of this commandment, in the sight of God a constant breach of it, and the cause of almost every transgression that can be committed against it. Wherefore I set in the front of sins against the ninth commandment,

First.—*A censorious disposition.* And this is such a temper of heart as disposes us to believe badly of others, fills us with suspicions of every one we deal with, and keeps us upon the watch to pick up all the ill impressions we can to the disadvantage of others. Nothing in the whole world shews an uncharitable, unchristian, unhumiliated devilish spirit, to be in man, so much as this. It is worse than *revenge*, where passion pleads; it is worse than *envy*, where interest or reputation urge to bear an unloving heart towards others: it is a cool deliberate wishing evil to others, and rejoicing in it, without any provocation but the deep malignity of a proud heart. What can be so devilish as to love to see sin in others, and to rejoice in the least appearance of it? Beyond all the evil tempers you can think of, and all the horrid actions you can

devise, it argues the soul dead in trespasses and sins; wrapped up in its own pride, it looks about with content on a world lying in wickedness, and feeds itself with delight and complacency upon the growing testimony of man's sinfulness; till at length it comes to a conclusion that none are to be trusted, and that there are no such things as grace and integrity in the world. But, you say, is there any such thing as this censorious disposition among men? Alas! we all brought it into the world with us; and, if there has not been a divine change wrought upon our souls since that time, we are now under the dominion of it. And the very best will not think themselves free from it. Whence is it but from this that the faults and infirmities of others make so considerable a part of conversation; that our ears if not our mouths are open in the tale of others' vices; that while some are hearing with a sinful indifference, others are eagerly contending, as for victory, to fix the crime, and set it out in an unfavourable light? This we have all known, I fear do still know, more or less, to be our conduct; which nevertheless can arise from nothing but this very censorious temper. But we shall see more of it in speaking to the two other things, rash judging, and readiness to hear evil of others.

Secondly.—*Rash judging* is a sin against this commandment. *Judge not*, says our Lord, *that ye be not judged* *. The reason and argument alleged shews the nature of the judgment forbidden; as ye expect

* Matt. vii. 1.

God not to judge you in severity, so be not you severe judges of the conduct of others. And herein lies a mighty argument for judging the most favourably we can of others : for if God, who knows perfectly what poor sinners and imperfect servants of his we are, will yet deal favourably for his Son's sake in judging us ; much more should we, who are under the same condemnation before God, form the most favourable judgments we can one of another, seeing we do not so well know the hearts one of another. *Judge not, that ye be not judged.* But you will say, how can I help judging that which lies plainly before me ? True, you cannot. And many times it is your duty to judge : for if you do not judge sin to be sin, and a sinful man to be a sinful man, you cannot reprove the one or avoid the other. Charity does not oblige you to put out your eyes, and to call evil good. But it forbids you to condemn any in your own mind upon an insufficient warrant, and requires that you should hope all things that can possibly be hoped concerning your brother. Thus, though you cannot but determine in your heart that those who live in open sin, such as drunkenness, profaneness, idleness, covetousness, and the like, are without the grace of God in their hearts ; yet if the wickedness be hid, and there be the appearances of godliness, we are to hope the best, nor to be beat out of this hope by one thing or another which we cannot so well reconcile and account for. And then, as to particular actions, to put always the most candid interpretation upon them, not to ascribe that to malice, revenge, pride, covetousness, which

may be called by a gentler name, and arise from a less blamable principle, if not a good one. Further than this; not to determine any one's whole character to be naught because of a particular action confessedly indeed bad, but still to hope it was through force of surprise, and that all nevertheless may be well at bottom, enters into the heart of charitable judging. The sum is, "secret things belong to God," who will not have us measure beyond our line; and rather to think well of those who may be bad, than to be ready to think ill of those who may be otherwise, because of some appearances to the contrary. But a censorious spirit will set us on judging contrary to all these measures. The Pharisees were sure to take by the worst handle every thing Christ did. When he cast out devils, they will needs have it he is a conjurer, and in league with Beelzebub. When he takes friendly notice of the most abandoned to do them good, presently he is no other than "a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." They first invented an evil action where there was none, and then condemned him for it as the vilest of sinners. Pharisees were hard censurers, nothing could escape them. Could you have seen the heart of one of them, you would have found there a tribunal set up purely for condemnation, a purpose to condemn all, an eagerness to discover the least flaw, a cruel decision of every thing in the most unfavourable manner, and an evident exultation of spirit in the supposed discovery. It would be well, indeed, if there had been nothing of their spirit in us. But, alas! how often have we judged

rashly, condemned upon false grounds, not put the most favourable interpretations, and come to hasty and uncharitable conclusions upon the state or conduct of our neighbours; and hereby proved that we are not such strangers to the censorious disposition above spoken of as we may have been apt to imagine?

Thirdly.—*A willingness to hear of the faults of others* is another effect of a censorious disposition, and sin against this commandment. This is so plain that I need not say much upon it; yet so common, I fear, that it must not be passed by. The question then is this, how are you affected, and how do you behave, when you hear of other people's faults? If you be charitably disposed as you ought, you will be really grieved for the person accused, if the thing be so clear that you cannot gainsay it; and if you think he is hardly judged and misrepresented, you will not fail to defend him. But if you are well enough pleased to hear such things said of another, and better pleased when you find they are true; if, supposing you think him severely dealt with, you yet sit still, and let the matter pass as if no concern of yours; will you imagine that you have a real love for your neighbour, and concern to maintain his reputation in the world? Or will not this argue very much of that censorious spirit to be dwelling in your heart? Yet have you never heard too patiently, or too silently, or too pleasingly, the faults of others? To talk of other people's blemishes is the general talk of some, and they are the subject of a great part of their conversation. I beseech you how

could this be unless we were pleased with it, and but too forward to hear it? Otherwise conversation of that kind would soon be discountenanced and dismissed, and the talebearer and slanderer be constrained to keep in the venom of his malicious heart, which now, too much at liberty, he pours out to the poisoning of the hearts of others. Revenge and envy, as was hinted above, are a kind of alleviations and comparative excuses for being content to hear of the defects of those who we think have done us ill, or stand in our way; and therefore the most dreadful mark of a censorious spirit must lie in this, that we are pleased and forward to hear of the faults of those to whom it may be we are strangers, or between whom and us there have been no jealousies. To be willing to hear of the faults of another, through revenge or envy, is bad enough; but to sit down in cold blood, as it were, and for very malice-sake to be pleased in hearing a history of their vices or infirmities against whom we bear no resentment, and are perhaps little or nothing acquainted with; this is to rejoice indeed in iniquity, bespeaks a censorious disposition in the very height of it, and is in truth a consideration that should alarm us all.—This will suffice for the first head, and evidently show how far a censorious disposition, hard judging of others, and a willingness to hear their faults, is from preserving as good an opinion as we can of our neighbour in our own hearts.

Secondly.—The other duty required by this commandment is, that according to our power we do

maintain his character in the world. And so these three other things fall also under the censure of this commandment :—

First.—Going about to lessen the real attainments of our neighbour, which is detraction.

Secondly.—Laying a charge against him that does not belong to him, which is slander.

And, *Thirdly.*—Discovering his real faults needlessly, which is evil-speaking.

I would not you should lose sight of censoriousness, as lying at the bottom of the greater part of detraction, slander, and evil-speaking. I say the greater part of it; although envy and revenge will also have their share. But then their province is more confined, reaching only to particular persons, and even in regard of their characters nothing so hurtful as censoriousness, because these tempers generally make themselves known by the bitterness or violence wherewith they express themselves; and so by overdoing carry with them an antidote against what is said, and make the envious or angry person heard with allowance, and with little heed taken of what he speaks. Whereas the censorious tongue goes through the world, and spares none; while in the mean time, putting on the guise of impartiality or the shew of compassion, characters fall before it with an influence very hardly to be resisted, insomuch that it will be exceedingly difficult for the most charitable heart to go away without some lessening impression of the persons spoken of. So much peculiar mischief arises from a kind of conversation, which is often thought to have no great

harm in it. But to come to the particulars, which I shall in a manner but barely mention, as the nature of their sinfulness has been already shewn.

First.—*Detraction* is a going about to lessen the character of others. It is a doing that by our neighbour which the spies did by the promised land, bringing up such an evil report upon him, and setting him in such colours, as to make him little regarded. It were endless to mention the various methods that may be used for this purpose, such as marking out his defects in that very grace or gift wherein he excelleth, or lowering him by the mention of his weak side, or hiding his deservings by setting forth the more eminent character of others, or rendering him despicable by some accidental circumstance belonging to him; as the Jews said of Christ, *is not this the carpenter's son?* I say the methods of detraction are endless. The thing itself is evident, that when we say any thing to the hurt or hinderance of our neighbour's character, whereby he may be rendered less serviceable to Christ and the world, we actually sin against God, and others, as well as him. And therefore it will behove us to reflect whether we have not carelessly or willfully lessened the real attainments of others, in grace, virtue, and prudence, by speaking slightly of them, and behaving as if they were of little account. A little done this way may have produced much mischief, and so involved us in great guilt.

Secondly.—Another way of hurting our neighbour's character is by *slander*; that is, by bringing a charge against him that does not belong to him. Now these

slanders are either false reports invented and uttered about another, or such reports added to or carried about by those that heard them. In the case of raising false reports the thing is plain, and the sin manifest. But where is the difference between raising a report, and adding to it what it had not before, to make it more considerable? But you will say, perhaps, you did not mean to make it worse than you heard it; it was your mistake. However, you see an injury is done to your neighbour; and at whose door does the blame lie but yours? Yea, and had you reported no more than you heard, to what end did you report a story to the hurt of your neighbour's character? Can you lay your hand on your heart, and say, in the presence of God, "I had no other design in doing it but "God's glory, and out of some charitable purpose?" If not, you acted the part of a talebearer, and you very well know that is a character far from being commended in Scripture. If it was not through revenge or envy you uttered the slanderous story, that lay burning in your bosom till it was imparted to all your acquaintance, you must have done it out of pure censoriousness, and in the want of charity, which was vastly worse.

Thirdly.—The other sin against the public maintenance of our neighbour's character is *evil-speaking*, by which I would understand here, speaking needlessly of the faults of others. We must speak of the sins of others when there is necessity; but when there is none, and no real good intended calls us to it, then, though the thing be true, we commit a sin in telling

it. If the glory of God and the good of others require, we must indeed speak the truth. But when we have no such design, and there is no manner of occasion, by speaking the truth we do but injure our own souls. Yet perhaps people will be ready to think they have done nothing amiss because they have said nothing but what was true to their own knowledge. But is this doing as you would be done by? Did your neighbour know any thing amiss of you, would you be willing he should, without any reason but to indulge his foolish heart and tongue, make it known, and ruin your character in the world? If not, the mere saying that what you have spoken is but the truth can be but a poor excuse.

And now, from the whole of this account of the ninth commandment, you may see what an enemy *your tongue* is to your soul, and what a perverse nature there is within you to set on fire your tongue. I will leave these two hints with you for the better ordering the one and the other :—

First.—Above all things in the world pray for a new heart. The chief transgressions of this commandment are within : and you know also it is *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*. As faith, hope, and charity, gain strength, the censorious principle will die in you as well as envy and revenge, and so you will be more free from receiving or uttering any thing to the prejudice of your brother's good name.

Secondly.—Enjoin this upon yourself, never to speak of the faults of others, unless absolutely obliged to

it. You will find this rule of prudence to be of great service, not only to the bridling of your tongue, but to the mortifying of your heart.

There are many other sins usually ranged under this commandment, such as flattery, boasting, and the like : but I have chosen rather to confine myself to the simple design of it, respecting the characters of others; especially as all these have been in substance spoken to under some of the former. The tenth commandment remains now only to be treated of, which, God willing, shall be our employment when we next meet.

S E R M O N XLV. .

GALATIANS iii. 24.

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

THE tenth and last commandment is our present subject, “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s.” For settling the true sense of which words, it will be needful to remark,

First.—That in the nine former commandments there has been direction given for every inward and outward act of duty owing to God or man, and all the sinful conduct contrary thereto has been prohibited and condemned. In the commandments of the first table, all those dispositions of mind towards God which are called godliness, as love, fear, trust, and every outward expression of them to God’s honour, are enjoined. And in the five first commandments of the second table, all relative duties in our special calling, as well as a right temper and conduct to our neighbour respecting his life, chastity, goods, and

name, have been particularly required of us. So that if the tenth commandment be, as no doubt it is, a law distinct from every one of the rest, as are the others; and has a meaning proper to itself, as to be sure it must; then its design cannot be to prohibit any particular sin, whether against God or man. Especially as to the sin of covetousness, to which the word *covet* seems at first sight to direct; it is to be observed that the sin of covetousness, that is, discontented carking carefulness, is already prohibited by the eighth commandment, and therefore cannot be intended here; and coveting our neighbour's wife, which is here distinctly expressed, cannot in any sense fall under the notion of such covetousness. And we must observe, besides,

Secondly.—That the design of the whole law being evidently to make sin fully known, that design would not be answered by it, if there had not been a particular commandment in it which should condemn those sinful desires of our nature, which are the principles of all sinful acts whatever. For if all sinful habits in the mind and all sinful actions without had been condemned, and yet the source of them all in the natural desires of our depraved nature been passed by without mention, the great sin of all, and the one source of all, had remained undiscovered and uncondemned, and the design of the law to bring us to Christ for deliverance from the guilt and power of all sin, by discovering it to us, and shewing us the curse threatened against us for it, had not been answered. Accordingly, in the seventh chapter to the

Romans, St. Paul does most plainly interpret this tenth commandment as condemning the natural desires of our depraved hearts. This depraved desire of his heart he speaks directly of from the seventh verse to the end of that chapter, styles it *sin* by way of eminence, sin that *dwells in him*, and *the law of sin in his members*; and by these descriptions makes it plain enough what he means by it. Yet this sin, this law of his members, he tells us, verse the seventh, he had not known; that is, he had not known it to have been in him, or not known it to have been sinful, and that there was guilt chargeable upon him for it, but for the tenth commandment, which he says made all this plain to him: *I had not known lust* (or, as it is in the margin, *concupiscence*) except the law had said, *Thou shalt not covet*; the corrupt desires, longings, or lustings of his heart, as different from sinful habits of the mind or actions of the body, he had not known to be sin, unless the tenth commandment had said, *Thou shalt not covet*. So we need go no further for the meaning of the word covet, nor for the design of this commandment; which manifestly appears to be this, to restrain, by condemning them, all irregular desires after any thing that is our neighbour's; that is (after any thing forbidden in the second table), before they are formed into determined purposes and projects of accomplishment.

And lest it should be wondered that no other desires are here mentioned than those which refer to the second table, the reason is, that all the sinful desires of our nature are only after the things prohibited

in the second table. The sin of our nature against the first table is to have *no* desire after God; and therefore, there being in our nature no desire after God, that desire only that is in our nature can be condemned; namely, desire after *earthly* and *sensual* things, both which are expressly mentioned in this commandment, coveting our neighbour's house being an *earthly* desire, and coveting his wife a *sensual* one.

But yet, that all desires after the things and enjoyments of this present time might not seem to be disallowed and sinful, the commandment also gives us to understand how we shall make a distinction between those desires after present things, which spring from our corrupted nature, and are in themselves sinful, and such as are innocent, and indeed in our present circumstances necessary. Thou shalt not desire any thing that *is thy neighbour's*; for to desire what is another's, for thy convenience or gratification, issues directly from the carnality and worldliness of thy nature, and plainly proves an inclination for present things which is neither consistent with love to God or man. It cannot be properly said that such a desire after present things is inordinate, as if the whole fault in it were that it is excessive; it is sinful from the foundation, rising from the corrupt principle within us, and betraying the carnal earthly nature. It is one thing to desire the things of this world for necessity; if the soul of an angel were dwelling in your body or mine, instead of that soul now dwelling in it, he could not do otherwise; but it is quite another thing to desire the things of this world for indulgence

of pride or lust ; this is sensual and earthly. I said just now that a difference is to be made between these desires and such as are inordinate. To desire carnally what is another man's is sinful in itself, as it arises from an earthly or sensual principle : to desire upon necessity is lawful ; but it is not so to desire necessary things inordinately ; for when necessary things are desired beyond the measure of God's word and providence, and with impatience and anxiety, then, though the desire in itself be not bad, yet the manner of desiring has sin in it. The whole I have been saying may be made plain and illustrated this way ; the commandment says, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house*. Now, suppose I have an house which is suited to my convenience, but, because my neighbour's is more magnificent, I desire to have his ; such desire arises plainly from pride, and is altogether sinful. But suppose I have no house at all, or that which I live in is not suited to my convenience, may I not desire my neighbour's ? Yes, so it be ordinarily ; that is, without desiring it to his hurt, and endeavouring to procure it only in honest ways ; otherwise my desire of his house, though lawful in itself, becomes sinful and inordinate. Ahab would have Naboth's vineyard : now, grant it would have been convenient for him, yet he desired it inordinately ; he must have it, right or wrong ; and, since there was but one way to it, innocent Naboth shall rather be iniquitously put to death as a traitor, and so the vineyard come to the king by forfeiture, than he will go without it.

One further thing should also be observed, that as it is difficult for us to desire necessary things ordi- nately, so also that desires in themselves sinful will be apt to mix with those that arise from necessity. Ahab, we will say, wanted Naboth's vineyard for a gar- den of herbs; but, had there not been some desire of pomp or pleasure accompanying it, he could not be in such want of a garden of herbs as to take Naboth's refusal so much to heart as he did.

Nay, and many times the really sinful desire will be clothing itself under the guise of necessity, and pretend necessity where there is really none. Can we suppose King Ahab was in real want of a garden of herbs? Is it not more probable that some scheme of indulgence or pomp made him conceit he wanted Na- both's vineyard; and that, for any matter of necessity in the thing, he could as well have done without it?

But you will say Ahab was a king, and many things are necessary to the state of a king that are not so to others. This is true. But pride and indulgence are just as much sinful principles in the great as in others. And necessity in their station is just no other than necessity in any other station. So that their station shall never justify desires either sinful in themselves, or sinful in the inordinacy of them.

To collect now all that has been said, we see there are two kinds of desires: one of real necessity, which are not sinful unless inordinate; and the other issuing from corrupt nature, and always sinful. The sin of inordinate desire after necessary things falls under the seventh and eighth commandments; the business of

the seventh commandment being to regulate our bodily desires, as that of the eighth is to direct our desires in respect of worldly possessions. So that the precise sense of the tenth commandment is now fixed down, according to the interpretation St. Paul has given of it, to such covetings or desires as are in themselves sinful, and therefore charge us with guilt, although they be not formed into determined purposes of accomplishment, nor brought into outward act.

Should I attempt to enumerate all those various lustings and desires, that pass through our hearts without being permitted to make a settlement there, and yet are forbidden by this commandment, the undertaking would be endless. Yet it will be needful to give some sort of account of them. And the commandment itself must be the rule for me to go by. It says, *Thou shalt not covet any thing that is thy neighbour's.* Now to follow the order of the foregoing commandments of the second table, to which it was shewn above this concupiscence could have only respect immediately; I say my neighbour's *dignity* is his, his *soul and body* are his, his *wife* is his, his *goods* are his, his *good name* is his; and the covetings or lustings of our hearts after any of these things which are his are here forbidden. A short word upon each of these will be sufficient, and the whole together will, I think, take in the whole scope of the law of sin, which is in our members, in all its sudden, secret, and most abominable workings.

First.—Thou shalt not covet or have any sinful desires in thy heart after thy neighbour's dignity.

And here all those sudden risings of heart against the authority of God, in the persons of those he has set over us, come in and are condemned. We have been from our youth up, and still are, in one degree or other in a state of subjection; and if all stubborn, impatient, self-willed, angry suggestions of the heart, against our governors, are so many covetings of his dignity, and therefore sins against this tenth commandment; (and that they are really covetings of his dignity, who does not see, when they are but saying in our hearts, Ah! that I were but in his place?) I say, if all these stubborn risings of corrupt nature against our superiors be trespasses against the tenth commandment, (and we have been all in subjection to various superiors, to parents, schoolmasters and mistresses, other masters, husbands, ministers, magistrates, those that are more aged, more honourable, more qualified than we,) who can count the number of his sins in this one point only?

Secondly.—Thou shalt not lust after thy neighbour's life; thou must not have a motion to his hurt in soul or body within thy heart. All envious, revengeful, unmerciful suggestions against him, are contrary to charity, and rise out of a depraved nature. Nay, you say, But suppose I have not yielded to them? That alters not the case. God is in this *commandment* condemning your sinful nature, and charging you with guilt because of all and every of those lustings that have at any time been in your heart against your brother's spiritual or temporal welfare. When anger rose in your breast because of some injury you thought to have been done you; or

displeasure because of his eminence beyond you in wealth, or grace, or abilities; or jealousy because he seemed coming too near you; or secret satisfaction when you heard the news of his miscarriage in duty, misfortune in business, his sickness or death, as one standing in your way: when any of these accursed lustings wrought in your heart, there was *sin*. And if you are not a perfect stranger to your own heart, and so of course not well acquainted with the glorious and necessary salvation of Jesus Christ, you are very sure that such horrid instances of corruption have been in you, while you tremble at the very remembrance of them.

Thirdly.—Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife. But it is difficult to speak of this subject before any who have indulged imaginations of this sort without raising them; yes, even though the subject should be touched with the utmost degree of tenderness and caution, and in such manner as to be no kind of temptation to a chaste mind. I therefore do but mention that point, and pass on to observe, that all manner of sensuality being also condemned by the seventh commandment, all motions towards it fall under the censure of the tenth. God will be the portion and joy of his people; but our depraved hearts have found out another portion in sensual gratifications. And who has not found the heart rising up to meet indulgence with joy? Why did our Apostle take so much pains to hold his bodily appetites in subjection, but that he found the cravings of them so importunate? It is the body that is the great snare to the soul; and who

can say how many thousand times his soul has given entertainment to the sinful desires of it, while the very refreshments of nature, our meat, drink, and sleep, afford it such constant opportunities ?

- But, *Fourthly*, Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods. What I now speak of is not the sin of covetousness ; that is, anxious desiring from a discontentedness with what I have already, nor that determining and devising of theft before it is committed ; but that which is at the bottom of both, the sinful stirrings of corrupt nature after the interests of the world, in which our foolish hearts do naturally trust. Thou shalt not lust after thy neighbour's goods ; that is, every secret wish thou hast found in thy heart, that any part of another's substance, his house, estate, wealth, were thine, that thou mightest be more safe and secure in the world (that is to say, more out of the reach of God's providence and of all dependence upon him), was a sin. Search therefore the records of your conscience. You have not wished to have your neighbour's goods by fraud or force, I allow : but have you never wished any of them yours from the instigation of a world-trusting heart ? We have, as to the expression, only lightly said, perhaps, If I had but so much of such an one's fortune ; but have in our hearts more seriously wished it than we imagine. What are all those fearful, careful, thoughts about worldly wealth, but so many lustings, not of moderate desire after what is necessary, but of a sinful desire to be as great a man as my neighbour ? And that amounts to the same thing as wishing he and I might

change places. And is then every anxious worldly desire a sinful coveting your neighbour's goods? I pray you, then, see what a nest of them your heart has been. Has it not been so? What! no anxious desires or fears, which, like guests of a day, have tarried with you awhile at least, though they could not fix upon you habits of covetousness, nor prevail with you to design any schemes of dishonesty? Surely, whosoever you are, your worldly heart has brought infinite guilt upon you. Yet once more:

Fifthly.—Thou shalt not lust after thy neighbour's good name. The meaning of this is, thou mayest never have in thy heart one suggestion of envy because thy neighbour is better than thou; of hatred because his virtues reprove thy vices; of displeasure because he will follow his conscience sooner than thy will; of delight, no, not in the least degree, in hearing of or beholding his sins: this is desiring hurt to thy neighbour's name: yea, though thou dost not approve any of these suggestions, but art really displeased with them, and wouldst never more know them, yet they are thy sins. But have we never known any of these devilish suggestions in us, never any risings of envy against any who seemed better Christians than ourselves, never any stirrings of dislike against others because their conduct reprov'd ours and made us uneasy, no workings of displeasure because our brother would do what seemed to him right, no sudden chillings of heart when we have heard others praised, no malignant satisfaction when they have been evil-spoken of? Truly I would not venture to charge any living man

with the least of these things, were it not that I know they are natural to us all; and among the most fearful proofs of our fallen state.

What has been said may suffice to shew the design of this last commandment, and therein the sad sinfulness of our nature.

That we have all experienced the secret workings of the corrupt principle in us, in the manner described, I take for granted; for *As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man**. But whether we have reckoned these motions and desires that we have found in our hearts to be sinful is a question. St. Paul was a great and learned man; yet, till this commandment was laid open to him in its deep meaning, he tells us himself he either did not know concupiscence, or did not know the sinfulness of it, and the guilt it brought him under. It will be our business therefore to be very close with our hearts, and to search out this root of bitterness, which, if it had not been in us, there had been no need of an express commandment against it; and we shall be acting a very foolish part, if, when we hear God condemning it, we ourselves make little account of it. Rather we should be thankful that it has pleased God to make the sinfulness of it known to us by levelling the curse against it; and so, humbling ourselves on the sight of our apostacy, betake ourselves to him who was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, even Jesus Christ our Saviour, to whom, &c.

* Prov. xxvii. 19.

S E R M O N XLVI.

GALATIANS iii. 24.

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

AFTER having completed the explanation of the whole law, contained in the ten commandments; yet once more I take up the same subject, in order to lay out before you more fully than I have yet done the use of the law.

Now the very giving out of the law shews the use we must make of it. The giving out of the law plainly implies these several things:—

First.—That sin is in the world. A revealed moral law is perfectly needless to reasonable creatures in a state of perfection, seeing they have the whole knowledge and practice of all duty in their very nature. To what purpose should God say to the holy angels, “Ye shall love the Lord with all your mind and strength, and one another as yourselves,” when already they perfectly know and perfectly do this, and there is not the least inclination in them to do any thing else? Accordingly, when our first parents were in their state of innocency, there was no moral law

charged upon them; though they were God's subjects; for they had both the knowledge and practice thereof in themselves. There was no more need to bid Adam love God than there is to bid you or me love ourselves.

Secondly.—The giving out of the law not only supposes that sin is in the world, but also that sin is not known to be sin. This is universally true. Sin is not known till some law shews it, seeing sin is the transgression of a law. The depraved nature of man is ever ready to call evil good, to pass by that as nothing which is most provoking and dishonourable to God, and especially to hide its own malignant wickedness under the smoothing titles of human frailty and imperfection. To this day no man knows sin to be sin till the law shews it him: and if after many ages God saw fit to collect into two tables the sum of man's duty, and to give it out in a most awful manner, it was but doing that in a more express way, with a special view to the approaching appearance of Christ in the world, which he had before found necessary to do by direct revelations, and the maintenance of his law upon men's consciences by tradition. Sin doth not appear to be *sin* without the law.

Thirdly.—The giving out of the law implies also that the consequences of sin are not regarded. The love of sin in men's hearts, and the prevalency of its practice in the world, make it look like a harmless thing, which may be meddled with without danger. With the ten commandments in our hands, and the curse against transgression of the least of them in our

ears, how easy do we sit down about the fearful consequences of sin in judgment and eternity! And how little then should we have thought of these consequences, had sin been left in the quiet possession of us, and we never been told by divine authority that the wages of it is death!

And, *Fourthly*, By the giving out of the law is evidently implied the purpose of mercy through Jesus Christ. Had there been no design of mercy, there could have been no end answered by giving out a law, which in that case we could not in *any* sort keep, when also our misery as sinners was determined before. But when the divine Majesty has a scheme of mercy in hand, which cannot effectually take place unless our sins be known, and the consequences of them apprehended, to give out the law by which both sin, and its consequence, death, are plainly set forth to view, is to declare in the very doing it the design of mercy, because it is taking the only method that could be taken of bringing us to it.

Yet, *Fifthly*, As the design of mercy is implied in giving out the law, so also this further design, that they who are brought to partake of this mercy, through the discovery of their sin and danger by the law, might find in the very same law a perfect rule after which to square their hearts and lives. Indeed the main end of all is conformity to the law, to which both the knowledge of sin and its danger by the law, and the purpose of mercy in Christ, are subservient; the law sending us to Christ for mercy, that being encouraged and enabled by him we may walk in con-

formity to God's commandments, imperfectly here, and wholly hereafter.

From these observations the use we are to make of the commandments appears to be this :—

First.—That we learn our guilt and misery by them.

Secondly.—That the sense of our guilt and misery by them do bring us unto Christ.

And, *Thirdly.*—That, being brought unto Christ, we do diligently walk in them.

First.—Therefore, as you intend to profit by the commandments, you must learn your guilt and misery by them. What I mean by your misery is plainly this, that if you have disobeyed God by breaking any of God's commandments, there is a curse lying against you for it. For the curse threatened against Adam, *In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die* *, lies against you as well as him, not only for his transgression, but every personal one of your own. *Thou shalt surely die*, a temporal death speedily, and, if not prevented by mercy, an eternal death in the world to come. You do not doubt of Adam's misery after his transgression, unless relieved by God's pardoning mercy; and you have no reason to doubt of your own without the same mercy. You see Adam, after eating the forbidden fruit, a poor condemned criminal, trembling before his Judge, and expecting nothing else but the execution of his sentence, without the least hope or remedy in himself. If God had resolved to strike him dead that moment, and put

* Gen. ii. 17.

in force against him all the further terrors implied in that word, *Thou shalt surely die*, he had nothing to gainsay to it, he could not prevent it. And if you have sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, put forth your hand and done that which God charged you you should not do, why is not your case as remediless as his? Has not God pronounced the sentence of death for it against you as well as him? And what can you do more than he could to prevent it? More than he could, can you prevent present death? Adam is dead, and so shall you also soon be. And what power have you, more than had Adam, to prevent death eternal? If therefore you have sinned, the sentence of death is gone out against you already, which you have no power to reverse in the whole extent of it; no more power to prevent eternal than present death. And, that you may know you have transgressed, God has given out his law. Your business is to prove and try yourself by it. To help you in doing which, the whole of it has been explained; and you have continually found yourself guilty, commandment after commandment. But, to assist you in fixing on your heart the whole extent of your guilt, it may not be amiss to lay all the charge of the law before you in a few words, and in such manner as to help your inquiries after your sins. Take therefore a summary of the ten commandments; but in an order different from that in which they stand, for the better ascertaining the whole extent of your sins, and the connexion which they have one with another.

Let us begin with the fourth commandment. Have

you not been wanting in the public honour you are required to pay to God by a religious observance of the sabbath-day? If you have,

Let us pass to the third commandment. Have you not also been wanting in paying honour to God in the whole of your conduct, by acting in every thing as became your dependence upon him, and his government over you? If here also you are guilty,

Let us pass to the second commandment, and ask, if you have put no slight upon his honour in respect of the worship due to him, either by neglecting it, or behaving irreverently in it? Now you cannot but be sensible that it was your duty publicly to honour God; and that you could do so no other way than by worshipping him, acting always in such a manner as became your dependence upon him, and solemnly observing that day which he has purposely separated for the maintenance and manifestation of his honour and name in the world. But here you have been wanting. Why? Surely because you had not a right disposition of heart towards God.

This leads to the first commandment; you had not that belief of God's being and glorious perfections, that reverence of him, that love towards him, that trust in him, which this first commandment requires, and which, had they been in the entire possession of your heart, would have unavoidably and uninterruptedly caused you to worship him to his honour, to act for his glory; and to bear your testimony to his name by the most religious observance of his day. But what excluded from your heart these dispositions towards God? It was sin, concupiscence or lust,

dwelling in you; which, with all its motions or desires, is condemned by the tenth commandment. And here the sins of commission have their foundation, and the reason is shewn why you have been without the love of God and man in your heart, and acted so much to the dishonour of the one, and the hinderance of the other, as you have done. The root of all lies in your sinful nature, for which, as well as for all and every of its desires and motions, you are charged with guilt by the last commandment. But, besides this, you have actually consented to the evil desires and motions of your sinful nature, and more or less they have formed the habits of your soul, and influenced the actions of your life; insomuch, that, because your nature is *sensual*, you have consented to the sensual desires of it, and put them into practice; for which you are condemned by the seventh commandment, which enjoins upon you temperance, soberness, and chastity: because your nature is *earthly*, you have consented to and acted upon the worldly motions of it, contrary to the eighth commandment: and, finally, because your nature is *devilish*, you have consented to and followed the *self-willed* motions of it, in opposition to the fifth commandment; its *envious*, *vengeful*, and *cruel* motions, in contradiction to the sixth commandment; and the purely *malicious* motions thereof in censoriousness, contrary to the ninth commandment; and all this in full and evident breach of the duty you owe to God and your neighbour.—Now such an inquiry will not leave any of us free from guilt; nor shall we be able to allege that in any of these things we have not sinned. And it has appeared

that we pass over one design of giving out the law, if we are not brought to find our sins by it. The law comes out because we are sinners, and to shew us that we are so, as well as to alarm us with our misery because of sin. And this work it must do, as we mean to seek for mercy and to obtain it. *The whole need not the physician*: and none are so dangerously sick as they that are so and do not know it. Wherefore let us lay God's law to our conduct, that we may certainly see what it has been; and then let us lay the curse of the law to the transgression of it. And thus, by the grace of God, we shall lay the good foundation of making a right use of God's merciful design towards us in giving out the law. And hereupon,

Secondly.—The sense of our guilt and misery through the law must bring us unto Christ for mercy. It was shewn above that the sentence against sin is already gone forth, *In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*; and it was observed that a part of this sentence is already executed, and daily executing in present death. The point is, can we do any thing to prevent the remaining and more fearful part of it, death eternal? If we can, God will be found a liar, who hath declared, *The day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die; and that the wages of sin is death* *, not only present, but most evidently everlasting, because that everlasting life, which it immediately follows in that passage is the gift of God, is set in opposition to this death. We can do nothing that

* Rom. vi. 23.

will prevent eternal death: if you think you can, you will by that very means effectually bring it upon you. The truth is, that the business of the judgment-day will be only to put in execution the sentence of eternal death on all of us who have not fled for refuge to Christ, and to give possession of eternal life to all of us that have: then the truth of that word shall appear, *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him* *. If there had been such a thing as justification by our own righteousness, there had been no such thing as a law given out, for there had been no need of it; we should have been a law unto, and have had the perfection of the law in ourselves: and therefore no one can have made a right use of the law who has not learnt by it the need of a Saviour, and to apply for mercy through that Redeemer who hath come into the world. Such an one has not learnt the first use of the law, which is to give the knowledge of sin; and must be sent back again to the precept and the curse of the law, to be taught, what he has not yet learnt to purpose, his guilt and misery. Christ is come into the world to save sinners; and we have God's word for it, a thousand times over, that he is *able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him*: but then the law came before Christ, to prepare the way for him, by making known the want of him, and thereby to bring men's hearts into a state to receive him. We never come to Christ till the law is first come to us; and the law

* John iii. 36.

is never effectually come to us till by it we are brought to Christ; that is, till we are convinced by it of our guilt and misery, and are looking after mercy in his righteousness. Wherefore this is the second step in the use of the law, that we betake ourselves to mercy in Christ, the promise of whom is plainly implied in the explicit giving out of the law. Hitherto the text evidently reaches, *The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.* But then,

Thirdly.—When we are come to Christ for deliverance from the curse of the law, have we no more to do with the law? Yes verily we have, we must walk in it all the days of our life. And that we shall not, we cannot, fail to do, if we be really come to Christ, if our faith in him be true. For if it be true faith it will work by love; love will be the certain infallible fruit of it, love towards God and our neighbour. And to walk in the love of God and of our neighbour is indeed to walk in God's commandments, for this is the substance of what all and each of them require of us; and if our hearts be in the real practice of this love, we shall sincerely conform to what God enjoins, forbear what he denies us, and valiantly oppose the desires and motions of our sinful nature within us. God did not give out the law with a purpose that we should lay aside the observance of it; just to shew us our misery, that we might cry for mercy, and then make no more use of it: but he gave us the law to shew us our guilt because we did not love God and one another; and he gave us the promise

to encourage us to walk in the love of himself and our neighbour. The design of all was to bring us to love, as the Apostle plainly witnesses, *The end of the commandment is charity**; the end of giving out the law, in which giving it out the promise is contained, is to bring us to the love of God and of each other. Without the law we had not known that we were fallen from charity, and the guilt of that state had not been apprehended; without the promise we had had neither encouragement nor power to love. But now the Law and Gospel go hand in hand to the same end, the former shewing us what love is, and the latter influencing us to walk in it. So charity is the issue of all. Hence it is that the truly humble believer takes so much delight in the law, and so heartily desires and endeavours to conform to it. Hence he cries unto God daily, from the bottom of his soul, “ Create, O my God, a new spirit within
“ me! I long to love thee with all my heart, to find
“ the deepest reverence of thy eternal Majesty always
“ there, and to make thee all my trust. Father of
“ mercies! grant me power to glorify thy name, to
“ attend upon thy appointments with holy worship,
“ to maintain only thy glory in all my conduct, to
“ profess myself thy servant in the most religious
“ observance of thine own day. O my God, heal
“ this fountain of sin that is in my nature, that I may
“ perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy
“ name. Or, if it may not yet be destroyed, bring

* 1 Tim. i. 5.

“ it daily nearer to death, that I may feel less and
“ less its accursed motions, and may never more
“ consent to them. Let love take its place, the love
“ of thee and of my brother, that I may indulge
“ no more any sensual earthly or devilish lust; but,
“ being pure in heart, heavenly-minded, and full of
“ charity, I may honour all men, forgive and do good
“ to all men, and speak as well as act to the edifica-
“ tion of my brother.” To such a prayer as this the
heart of the man who is come to Christ does unfeign-
edly say *Amen*. He is no believer whose heart does
not. Yet what is all this but a desire and disposition
wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost to walk in
God’s commandments? for I have only put into the
form of a prayer the duties that are contained in them.

You see now the use that is to be made of the law,
how it must shew us our sin and misery, drive us to
Christ, and be our rule of walking with God as obe-
dient children. If the two former of these be done, the
third will unavoidably follow. But the main difficulty
lies in the first, the conviction of our real guilt
and misery by the law. To this point, according to
the tenour of the text, the foregoing discourses have
been directed. That they have had at least this bless-
ing I will trust, to have shewn us all more of our
sins. How far they may have been instrumental to
convince any of us of our misery because of sin, and
to stir up in us a hearty concern about salvation,
is another question; and it will behove you all to
consider how you will answer it on the last day.
That day is hastening upon us; a joyful or a terrible

day, according as we shall then be found. Who can say how terrible, my dear brethren, to any soul of you who will not now hear the sentence of the law to conviction, and therefore shall then hear it to condemnation! But O how joyful to that happy soul, who, having now heard the sentence of death, is fled to Jesus for refuge, and is walking in his steps, and therefore shall only meet his triumphant Lord in the last day to receive the final sentence of absolution, and to hear those ravishing words from his mouth, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world* *. O sirs, can such words as these reach our ears without piercing our hearts? May the Lord give us all grace to humble ourselves, that he may exalt us in that day, through the merits of our great Redeemer Jesus Christ!

* Matt. xxv. 34.

SERMON XLVII.

MARK xvi. 15, 16.

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

AFTER preaching the law for the discovery of sin, and the fearful ruin sin has brought upon us, I must needs come to you with the offer of the Gospel, that ye may know your case is not desperate, that ye may hear the glad tidings of salvation, that ye may lay hold on eternal life. It is not the ultimate design even of the law to wound, but by opening the deadly disease of sin, by making the smart of it felt, that it may be a means of directing to the Gospel for a cure. So both Law and Gospel speak the same gracious language, and the one and the other points out glory to the sinner. Has the law done its part? Has the law shewn you, my dear brethren, that ye are sinners, guilty sinners, condemned sinners, helpless sinners? Has it shewn you the plague of your nature, how sensual, earthly, and devilish, how atheistical, ungodly, and impious, ye came into the world, have lived therein more or less, and your wretched hearts

still are? And are you looking about where to fly ; where to cast your guilt ; where to get peace with God, peace of conscience, deliverance from the fear of death and judgment, and the fire that shall never be quenched? where to find help against sin, and power to master its influence, and to become again like unto God in the temper of your souls and the conduct of your lives? Are ye intent upon this search after salvation, as having seen that your *all*, your *eternal all*, depends upon it? that if your guilt be not remitted, your sentence be not reversed, your peace with God be not procured, your spirit be not sanctified, you are undone, utterly, eternally, undone, and have not the least glimpse of hope in that other world into which time is swiftly carrying you, and where you will live ages unnumbered by any but God, infinitely more than the blades of grass that cover the fields of the earth, the drops that compose the vast ocean, the sands that lie on the shores of it? Are you looking with awful concern upon this amazing scene ; and, knowing what you are, and what God is, and that it is but a hand's breadth before death will be upon you, do you find this momentous thought pressing upon your heart, " What shall I do? I, whither shall I go? " Ah! that the Lord would have mercy upon me, " would turn away his eyes from beholding my " sins ; that the eternal God would look on me as " a child ; that he would rid me of all my fears and " all my sins ; that I might behold his face in glory, " and live in his favour in that heavenly kingdom " that is to come! Surely my soul should bless

“ him, his mercy should be all my song, and I
“ would be as loud and earnest as any of the blessed
“ inhabitants of that everlasting city in shewing forth
“ his praise.” And is this indeed your wish? Would
you esteem yourself happy could you look on God as
your friend, death without fear, judgment as the day
of your hope, the joys above as your inheritance?
Why all these things are to be had in Christ, they are
all laid up in him; pardon, peace, adoption, resur-
rection, life, glory, are all laid up in Christ; and,
what is more comfortable, more encouraging, you may
have them all as freely as you will ask for them. Nay,
they are all offered you; nay, you are pressed to re-
ceive them; nay, you are commanded to do it; yea,
your refusal of God’s free gift will be taken so ill that
you shall be damned for not accepting it.

I am not now to tell you who Christ is, or what
he has done; “ how for us men and for our salvation
“ he came down from heaven,” and by his obedience
unto death both fulfilled the law and satisfied the
curse of it. At the time when Christ spoke the words
of the text, he was risen from the dead, and it was
manifest thereby to the very eyes of his Apostles
that the great work of redemption which he had under-
taken was actually completed. It remained only to
make it known. His personal presence was required
in heaven; and therefore he commissions them to
publish, declare, and offer this redemption to sinful
men. *Go ye into all the world, &c.* I will just open
the words in the order wherein they lie, and then
apply them.

Hear, then, Christ's commission to his disciples. And if his commission, then he speaks by them. *Go*; it is *I* send you. Deliver this message in my name. Should any ask you by what authority you declare these things, say you are sent by me, and shew them these words of mine by which I empower and command you to go; you and all after you that I shall send forth to preach the Gospel. *Go into all the world*; not to the Jews only, but to the Gentiles, to people of every name and language under heaven. Your commission is unlimited, I will have none excepted. *Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature*; you shall carry the offer of salvation with you, and make a tender of it to every soul. I will have every creature told he may be saved if he will. I will have every creature invited to accept eternal life in me. You are to pass by no one, neither circumcised nor uncircumcised, Scythian nor Barbarian, bond nor free. Let them know that all and every one of them is welcome. I will have my Gospel preached in all the world, and offered to every creature wherever you go. Offer it to the sick as well as the whole, to the bad as well as the good. I will have no one on any pretence passed by; for all are welcome: and I will have all told so in my name, and convinced that they are so by this commission which I give you to shew them. And to you I declare further, what I require you also to declare wheresoever you go preaching the Gospel, *He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved*. Whatever sinner heartily accepts this my salvation, preached by

you and others unto the end of the world, so as to become my disciple indeed, receiving the Gospel in the whole fulness of it, as a salvation from the guilt and power of sin ; and, so believing, is baptized in token of his faith in me and dependence upon me, not only putting away the filth of the flesh, but having the answer of a good conscience towards God ; I tell you, and will have you declare publicly, that that man, whatever he has been before, shall be saved. *But he that believeth not shall be damned.* That I will have you remember yourselves, to quicken your diligence in preaching the Gospel. And that I will have you declare in all places as an encouragement to the broken-hearted, that they may know from my mouth, that nothing else but unbelief shall damn men ; and to alarm those who lie dead in trespasses and sins, and those who will not receive me : *Go therefore into all the world, and say to every creature, He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*

You see now the force of the words, and the authority we have as Christ's messengers to offer the Gospel to you. I am guilty therefore of no presumption, and go not a jot beyond my orders, when I tell you that I am sent to you by Christ Jesus the Lord of all, the Judge of quick and dead, to offer unto you the forgiveness of all your sins, perfect peace and reconciliation with the Almighty God, and all the blessings of the kingdom of heaven in him. And in the name of Jesus, and by the commission which you see

he has given me, I do this day offer this whole glorious salvation to all of you, and to every single soul of you here present. By the same authority I declare to you all this day, that if ye accept the offer, and deal sincerely with God in it, all and whoever among you does so shall be saved. And further, in the name of Jesus, I do also this day charge and require you all to accept it, upon pain of the eternal displeasure of Almighty God, and of your own endless damnation. And remember that no excuse will be allowed ; you may not keep back because you are guilty, nor refuse because you have the pleasures or interests of this world upon your hands ; for I am bid to tell you in the plainest words, that if you believe not, and whosoever among you believeth not, shall be damned.

Thus I deliver my message. And now I desire to persuade you that you will accept the offer. And here I will mention two points :—

First.—The *certainty* of your ruin out of Christ, and of your salvation in him.

Secondly.—The *greatness* of your ruin if you slight his offer, and of your salvation if you close with it.

First.—I beseech you to accept the offer this day made you, by the consideration of the *certainty* of your ruin out of Christ, and of your salvation in him. Neither of these stands upon probabilities or peradventures, the one and the other being as certain as the unchangeable truth of God. For what doth the word of God say on the one part and the other ? It

says, *On the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die* *. It says, *Though hand join in hand, yet sin shall not be unpunished* †. It declares, *The wages of sin is death* ‡. And insists, *There is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved, but only the name of the Lord Jesus Christ* §. On the other part, it speaks with a like fulness; *Whosoever believeth on him shall not perish, but have everlasting life* ||. *He that hath the Son of God hath life* ¶. *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit* **. There is no question about the matter on either side; so that it is alike certain you are ruined without Christ, and may be saved in him. Now therefore consider: the facts against you are incontestable; you have sinned; it is as certain you were born in sin as that you were born at all; as sure that you have lived in sin more or less as that you have lived at all. Then there is no denying God's declarations against sin; and you are not stronger than he to frustrate them and reduce them, to nothing. You are a dying man, and you cannot help it; you must appear before the judgment-seat, and cannot avoid it. But you will perish for ever, unless you have an interest in Christ, as surely so as you live, as surely as you must die, as certainly as you shall be called out another day before the Judge of the quick and the dead. And is it true also that you may be saved and live for ever if you will? Has the

* Gen. ii. 17. † Prov. xi. 21. ‡ Rom. vi. 23. § Acts iv. 10, 12.
 || John iii. 16. ¶ 1 John v. 12. ** Rom. viii. 1.

Son of God died for the ungodly ? Has he commanded that the offer of his salvation be made to you ? Is that salvation firmer than the heavens, and will it last longer than they ? United to Christ, will you see the earth passing away with fervent heat, and the heavens wrapped up like a scroll, yourself the happy witness of a new heaven and earth, the region of righteousness, and your habitation for ever ? Are these things indeed so ? And will you hesitate a moment whether you shall close in with the offered salvation while you may assuredly have it ? Alas ! Sirs, if you do not come and lay hold on eternal life in Christ Jesus, the real cause is, that you do not believe any of these things ; you know indeed that you have done this and that which you have heard God has forbidden you ; you know also you shall die, as do others ; but you do not believe that sin has entailed God's curse upon you ; that you shall certainly appear hereafter before the judgment-seat of Christ ; that, being such as you are, you shall certainly be damned ; that there is no hope for you but in Christ, and that in him you shall enjoy a life everlasting. You really believe nothing of all these matters, and that makes you neglect this great salvation, and hear the offer of it so coldly as you do. But, though you believe nothing, yet you cannot help seeing and feeling that you are in a world of misery ; where (in proverbial language) briars and thorns vex and tear you every day till you shall be laid in the dust. And how think you this comes to pass ? Is there nothing amiss, judge you, when God so afflicts his creatures ? Can you

imagine it is for any thing else but their sins? And, if you do not repent, may you not reasonably conclude that all other God's declared judgments against sin, as well as those you see, feel, and fear, will surely be executed? My dear brother, I beseech you venture upon no dreadful experiments. Search seriously into the truth of your case now, and accept offered mercy while yet the day of salvation is not ended. Try yourself by the law for conviction; and then try Christ for salvation; and you will do a work which you shall never repent of hereafter; and I venture to appeal to yourself, whether you are now satisfied this work is already done.

But, *Secondly*.—To the certainty of your ruin or salvation being without Christ or in him, add the *greatness* of that ruin and of that salvation. The text sets out this in two important words, you shall be *saved*, you shall be *damned*. *Damned!* The very sound is terrible; there is not a sinner in the world that likes so much as to hear the dreadful shocking word. *Saved!* This is all, you can desire no more. *Salvation!* It is a word the angels cannot utter with that sensibility of joy that belongs to it. It is the sinner's word, the saved sinner's word of triumph in life, in death, in glory. *Damnation!* It is the un-humbled sinner's terror; I cannot name it but he trembles. *Damnation!* It is the good Redeemer's pity. The thought of it draws tears from his eyes; yea, and the very blood from his heart. He sees, the dear compassionate Jesus sees, the long and horrible chambers of hell; sees the miserable sinners covered over with inextinguishable flames; hears their

hopeless cries for pity; knows they shall never, never, never be delivered. The foresight of it melts his soul into compassion; he offers himself to suffer in our place, he makes an atonement, he runs between the living and the dead; he cries, "Here, sinners, come, come to me, and you shall escape that horrible pit; turn, follow me, and you shall be safe; O come to me, and you shall not die." And what! my dear friends, shall Jesus thus pity us in vain? Is there refuge from this wrath to come, and shall we not betake ourselves to it? Alas! do but set salvation in the other scale; over-against the first and second death set resurrection to life, and glory eternal. See, my brethren, what fearful prospects lie in the road of death; misery every step you go in the peaceless road; misery growing more formidable as you draw nearer your end. Then what misery in the departing hour! who can tell? for we have not known it; and they that have may not come back to instruct us in it. Yea, and what misery after death! what misery at judgment, when the whole creation shall as it were die away at the sight of man's ruin! and for endless horrors! for the fire that never shall be quenched, for the worm that never shall die!—Ah, do but compare with these the blessings of salvation! The peaceful conscience walking with God as a reconciled Father, resting in the everlasting arms. The hope full of immortality, sweetening the bitterest passages of life. The departing saint looking up to Jesus, and smiling at death. The spirit made perfect waiting for the resurrection-day with infinite content. The meeting with Jesus in the clouds. The glorified body. The

final absolution. The sentence of life. The shout of angels. The entrance into paradise. The sight of God for ever. The sight of Jesus in his glory. The enjoyment of God world without end. The services of heaven. The fellowship of saints. The love, the peace, the joy, the rest, the glory, the safety, the security for ever of heaven's inhabitants. This is Salvation. Salvation, the daughter of true Faith. But what is that ugly monster that stands over-against it? It is Damnation, the child of Sin and Unbelief.

And what, my brethren! is unbelief only the cause that any of us shall perish? If we come to Jesus in sincerity, shall we escape all these things that are coming upon the world of the ungodly, and share in all this so vast salvation? So Christ himself tells us, you see; for I am but arguing from his own words. And are we already sentenced to this so great a death? And yet is this so great a life *this day* freely offered us? I am almost ashamed to ask which you will choose. But I know the enemy of souls will be striving hard to catch away the purpose which, I am hoping, now glows upon your heart. And will you suffer him? He will certainly do it, unless you call upon God to help you. I beseech you therefore, by all your eternal hopes, go and pray; pray that the thoughts which have been suggested to you may sink deep into your heart. And when at any time you begin to stagger and faint, remember this word, *He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.* I earnestly commend you to God's grace, for the sake of his infinite love in Jesus Christ.

S E R M O N X L V I I I .

I JOHN ii. 3, 4.

And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

THIS whole epistle of St. John is a catholic exhortation; and the special occasion and design of it seems to be, that none, being deceived by the love of sin, might take up an imagination, that what they called faith was that saving faith, which, by the constitution of the Gospel, is appointed to be the means of making us partakers of the salvation purchased by Jesus Christ, when it produced not its genuine and proper fruit of obedience in the heart and life. This he had entered upon in the first chapter, and declared very peremptorily, *If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another; and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin**. From which last words having taken occasion to ad-

* 1 John i. 6, 7.

dress some seasonable comforts to sincere believers, who, in the experience of daily infirmities, and in the case of disallowed falls into sin; might be ready to be discouraged, he returns again, in the words of the text, to his main matter; alleging, that though, as he had just before been intimating, it was true *that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin*, yet they only are partakers of this glorious privilege, who are possessed of that faith in God which engages their hearts and lives into his service. *And hereby we know*, &c. The truth of the assertion contained in these words is evident. The effects manifestly shew whether any, or what, the knowledge is. A man may be well assured that he knows God rightly, if what he knows of him is productive of an obediential spirit and conduct. But if these do not follow, whatever he seems to know, he is still in darkness, and a perfect stranger to a saving knowledge of him. Here therefore we are evidently taught two things:—

First.—That a right knowledge, or (which is the same) a right faith, is the only principle of true obedience. And,

Secondly.—That true obedience is the direct proof of a right knowledge or faith.

First.—A right knowledge or faith is the only principle of true obedience. To know God is to know him to be *what he is*; and unless God be known to be that most blessed Being he indeed is, and unless the relation we bear unto him be known also, there can be seen neither motive nor obligation to serve him; so that a right knowledge of God is the main

thing. They that live without God, as too many do in Christian as well as Heathen countries, are such as do not at all know him to be what he is. Did they in any measure of truth know that, they would find some influence from it on the heart and conduct. But it is not every sort of knowledge of God that will produce a true obedience.

To manifest this, let us consider what is meant by obedience. *Present your bodies*, saith St. Paul to the Romans, *a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service**. Take bodies here in the most strict and literal sense, and still the obedience of the mind, which alone can make any service reasonable, must be implied in presenting the body to the Lord. The body cannot present itself. It is the heart willingly presenting the body to God that can make it an acceptable sacrifice. So that the life of obedience lies in the willingness of the heart; *Delighting in the law of God after the inward man* †. Without this, bodily services can be neither living, holy, acceptable, nor reasonable. True obedience is the conformity of the *whole man* to the will of God, a will *within* to do what God pleases, and a power *without* to put it in practice. This is strongly expressed by St. Paul to the same Romans, *Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you* ‡. Wherein the spring of obedience, *from the heart*, the practice of it in the conduct, *ye have obeyed*, and the rule and measure thereof both

* Rom xii. 1. † vii. 22. ‡ vi. 17.

for the heart and life, *that form of doctrine which was delivered you*, are plainly noted.

Now the question is, “What is that knowledge of God which will produce such a will to do God’s pleasure? in other words, such an obedience from the heart?”

It must be observed that naturally we have no manner of *will* hereto, but just the very contrary, *the carnal mind being enmity against God**; and that in such a degree, that there is nothing in the whole world we are so averse to as this. Our inclinations carry us quite another way; and that with such a desperate hatred of God, that we incline to undergo any difficulties or hardships much more readily than to perform any the least part of the will of God; which is manifested by this single instance, amidst many others, that the most of those, who toil ten hours of a day in painful labour, find it a thousand times more irksome task, indeed cannot at all prevail on themselves, to spend even a quarter of an hour in a day in prayer. How then shall this enmity be overcome, and the will of man brought to the will of God? That it cannot be done where there is no knowledge of God is unquestionable.

But, *First*.—Will not a knowledge of God in his attributes, or as he is in himself absolutely considered, overcome this enmity of the will, and produce an obedience from the heart? Say this knowledge of God should be never so exact and complete; that he

* Rom. viii. 7.

were known to be all that glorious God that he is, self-living, all-sufficient, omnipresent, eternal, almighty, most holy, and just and good ; that the soul, as I may say, was standing looking upon, and with the utmost diligence and attention contemplating, this all-glorious Being ; would the effect of this knowledge and sight be the turning of the will to God, to serve him ? What answer does the case of Adam, immediately after the fall, and before the promise was made, furnish us with as to this matter ? Before his fall, he saw God with a degree of delight which the heart of man is now a stranger to ; but *then he hid himself*, as well as he could, *among the trees of the garden* *. What made him do so ? It was guilt made him do it, *he was afraid* †, he could take no comfort in the sight of God. God indeed was the same, but he was not. He was fallen, he had sinned, his heart was gone from God. What then could there be in the sight of an all-perfect Being, whose very perfection pleaded for and threatened his destruction, to engage his heart back again to God ? *He was afraid, and hid himself*. This is the true picture of a guilty creature looking only upon God according to his essential perfections. The most do not look on God at all. But when any are drawn seriously to consider him, the first thought fills them with fear ; and were they not relieved and encouraged by some apprehensions of his mercy, the sight of his excellencies would be so far from drawing over their wills and hearts to him, that

* Gen. iii. 8.

† iii. 10.

the more they knew of his power, knowledge, eternity, and greatness, the more settled would be their abhorrence of him, as discerning him in all these to be a sure, almighty, everlasting enemy to them. This is the very state of the fallen angels. They know God to be what he is. They know also that he has no mercy for them: and therefore every thought of him, while it makes them tremble, does but unavoidably rouse up the bitter and malignant hatred of their hearts against him for being what he is. Fallen creatures therefore have no *motive* in the sight of God, while only under an *absolute* consideration, to turn unto him to obey him from the heart.

And as they have no *motive* thereunto, so neither have they, nor can they derive, any *power* to turn unto God from such consideration of him merely. The power of turning to God, in a love of him, and of his commandments, is not of man, but of God; *Turn thou me, and I shall be turned*, is the language of every truly enlightened soul, knowing who has said, *A new heart will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them* *. Now if the turning of man's apostate will unto God to obey him from the heart be an act of God's power, then there must be a will

* Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27.

in God thereunto. But such a will in God does not arise necessarily from his nature. He is not obliged by his holiness, or justice, or goodness, or any other attribute, to condescend unto fallen creatures, as is plain from the case of fallen angels. And therefore, when he does condescend to them to forgive them and put a new heart into them, it is an act of his free and sovereign will, which he is not obliged to in any sort, and which therefore he will dispense in such matter as he pleases ; most certainly in such manner as to make those who are partakers of it sensible that his condescension unto them is not in any degree of debt, but entirely of grace. But now, when we look upon God absolutely, and not through a Mediator, and conceive him to have a regard to us, we do not respect this regard to us as an act of mere sovereign mercy ; but, though we may not observe it, as what we have a right to from him, what our circumstances have a claim upon him for, and what it would be contrary to his nature and to equity not to bestow ; and the consequence in this case is, that as we do not regard him in humility, so he does not give us that power to turn unto him, which we can have from no other quarter ; and so, with whatever speculative knowledge of him, and frequency of thought concerning him, our natural enmity against him still remains, and we do not, and cannot, obey him from the heart, with an unfeigned consent and deliberate choice.

And thus you see how a knowledge of God under a mere absolute view of him cannot produce true obe-

dience; that is, obedience from the heart, in a fallen creature; and that because to a fallen creature there is, in such a knowledge of God, neither motive nor power unto such obedience. From which consideration we may learn these two things, of great importance to Christian comfort and practice:—

First.—That the fears and doubts which do perplex the minds of serious persons have their cause in looking unto God too much in this absolute manner, and not altogether as he manifests himself in a Redeemer. It is certain, that the more a guilty dependent and accountable creature knows of God absolutely, the more he must be afraid of him. A sin-defiled conscience and the holy Majesty of God can never stand peaceably together. There is consciousness of sin in the very best, of sin which experience tells them will not be removed out of the way in such manner and to such a degree as to become a ground of sure and quiet confidence in God. And from the increase of this knowledge of God increasing apprehensions do arise, which will and can yield to nothing but the knowledge of God's mercy in the Mediator, as a sovereign and free act of his will.

The *second* is, that, in looking too much on God in an absolute manner, most believers find their progress in grace and holiness going on so slowly. In an absolute God there is, as I have shewn, no *motive* to engage the heart; and at the same time no *power* is derived from a mere view of God, *as he is in himself*, enabling us to choose his will, and reject and oppose the natural will of the flesh. And yet, as through the na-

tive pride of our hearts, and the continual suggestions of unbelief, we are all much more ready to consider God as he is in himself, and as he appears in the works of creation, than as he is manifest in Jesus the Mediator; I doubt not that herein lies a special cause of the abundant unfruitfulness we have to lay to our charge. But to proceed:

Secondly.—What cannot be effected by the knowledge of God, under an absolute consideration, is nevertheless the certain fruit of truly knowing God in the Redeemer Jesus Christ. And that for this plain reason, because by this knowledge both the things which rendered obedience from the former knowledge of God utterly impossible are actually taken out of the way; and in the Redeemer Christ both the most constraining *motive* and the most effectual *power* are ministered for obeying God from the heart.

For, *First.*—Whereas in an *absolute* God the more perfect knowledge of him does but discourage and drive off the soul in fear and torment; in a *covenant* God through Jesus Christ all is just the reverse; and every perfection of the divine nature, as it comes to be more distinctly discerned, increases the force of the motive for returning to him upon the soul conscious of guilt, and otherwise apprehensive of punishment. While a man sees himself justly obnoxious to divine wrath through disobedience, and yet sees God reconciled to him through Jesus Christ, such a knowledge of God is extremely suited to beget a generous self-displeasure at the thought of having dishonoured such a Majesty, to represent sin in its proper colours of de-

formity, and to engage the soul into the most deliberate purpose of offending no more against such a God, and of giving itself entirely up to his will and glory. But it is not reconciliation merely, but God's method of reconciliation and shewing mercy, which gives this argument its proper and full weight. "Justice shall be done upon sin, while mercy is shewn to the sinner. The Word will become flesh, and himself make an atonement," that in the very manner of shewing mercy we may see what we owe to justice, and so may want no motive to obedience which either deliverance from the deepest misery due to sin, or the display of the richest mercy by the freest act of condescending divine love, can possibly present to us. Sirs, who would think there could be so much as one soul standing out in disobedience, wherever this amazing mystery of love, the incarnation and death of the only-begotten of the Father, for and in the place of the ungodly, has been but only heard of? But that guilty creatures, who dared not otherwise look God in the face, should hear, and know, and have explained to them from day to day the riches of redeeming love, the incarnation, the life, the death, of the eternal Son for sin and for sinners, and God's freest offers of mercy and acceptance in him; that they should so continually hear and know this (as you all do, my brethren), and yet find their hearts unmoved, unconstrained, still as much in love with sin and at enmity with God as ever: this is strange! It would be unaccountable, were it not most easily to be accounted for by the vile corruption of nature that dwells in us, and whereof this is so

pregnant and lamentable a proof. Without this motive there could be no obeying from the heart; but sad experience shews that even such a motive as this is not of itself sufficient to beget true obedience in a fallen creature; and that, after all, unless God make this glorious motive effectual, by working in us thereby to will and do, all is in vain, and we shall be never brought to obey from the heart that very law of God which possibly we may be brought to see and to confess to be holy, just, and good.

But now, *Secondly*.—In a covenant God this also is provided for; and though an absolute God does not give grace and strength, yet a reconciled God, a God in Christ, does. In this relation he is styled the hearer of prayer. Nay, the very business of the Spirit, in this dispensation of divine grace and love, is to work upon the hearts of us sinners, preventing us with good desires, and enabling us to bring the same to good effect. The soul of man is the subject where the Spirit works conviction and conversion; and this he does by his sacred illuminations, whereby he discovers the misery of a fallen state, and the glorious remedy there is in Jesus; wherein, by disclosing the love of God in Jesus Christ, he stirs up and enables the heart to turn unto God in love, and in a cheerful willingness to serve, please, and glorify him. It is the Spirit that overcomes the enmity, while the means he uses is God's love in Christ. And all this you may observe in the most rational manner, perfectly consistent with the freest use of our reason, and the freest choice of our will. For as in a reconciled God he proposes to

our reason or understanding the most suitable and convincing argument unto our obedience, so thereby he stirs up our wills in the most deliberate manner, with the freest consent, and without the least constraint or violence, to choose the holy way of God's commandments.

Thus you see what that knowledge or faith is which is the principle of true obedience; and therein that what cannot be obtained through a knowledge of God at large is really and effectually wrought by the knowledge of God in Christ. Hence we learn,

First.—That it is by a constant contemplation of God in Christ, and in a dependence on the Spirit, that we shall grow into a more perfect conformity of the whole man (spirit, soul, and body), unto the commandments of God. Here is the only motive that can engage our souls, by at once removing our apprehensions of God's wrath against us, and representing to us the most desirable and condescending object; and to this also the operations of the Spirit are absolutely confined, according to the tenour of the covenant of grace. If we are not under this influence we have in fact no real obedience, whatever persuasions we may be under, or whatever specious appearances to the contrary we may have to produce, but our enmity against God remains upon our hearts; and if we are under it, yet the only reason why we are not more advanced in obedience is, because this glorious motive is not more powerfully and abidingly fixed in our hearts. *The love of Christ constraineth us, saith St. Paul, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were*

*all dead. And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again**. Wherefore, brethren, let us labour earnestly that *Christ may dwell on our hearts by faith* †. Remark the word *dwell*, not be admitted into us as one that comes to make us a visit, however frequent, but may have a constant abidance. This, this is the only way of comfort and victory. The more Christ is in you, the more sin will fall before him, and hope and love flourish. You will never repent the pains you take to entertain such a guest: behold his reward is with him every hour. Let Christ dwell with you here, and death shall not part you asunder; nay, you shall dwell with him for ever.

Secondly.—We may learn hence also in what manner we should receive the message of mercy brought us by our incarnate God. Thankfully, without all question; with hearts bearing some, though no proportion of gratitude to the vastness of the gift. God passed by sinning angels; he sent redemption to us. And such redemption! O sirs! what shall we think of it in heaven? yea, what upon our dying beds? Tell it out among the people, let the world know that their Redeemer liveth. Ah! my dear brethren, let us not be insensible to this love; let us not be ashamed of the only name under heaven whereby we must be saved; let us not disgrace that holy name whereby we are called. I beseech you, by all this mercy of

* 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

† Ephes. iii. 17.

God, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

The time set apart for the remembrance of our Lord's appearance in the flesh is before us. And how shall we commemorate that blessed manifestation? Shall we do it with spiritual, or with carnal, joy? Let us consider beforehand. What! is it a time for riot, debauch, and excess? This cannot be. He came to destroy the works of the devil. Holy joy becomes holy days. *To us a Child is born, to us a Son is given*; a Son to pardon, sanctify, and bless. Let our hearts be lifted up. Let the praises of God be in our mouths. Let the work of the Lord be on our hands. Let Jesus be glorified in us and by us. Brethren, be on your guard. The enemy will not be asleep. It is a season of temptation. One or another of you have found him working already, and prompting to your minds schemes of indulgence or riot. Take heed. Behold, you are warned. Do not so great wickedness, which the devil will be sure to drive you into if he can. What! when we pretend to remember the birth of the Son of God to save us, shall we do works that will shame him, and damn us, unless mercy afterwards interpose? I entreat you to remember that *Christmas* is the season of commemorating the nativity of the holy One; and not, as it is usually taken, a season for every sort of foolish mirth and abominable licentiousness. And, therefore do not yield to the sinful thought, "now *Christmas* is at hand, and I will keep it merrily." The mirth you propose is no other than madness. Away with these practices:

Christmas is not a Heathen feast. Behold, you are warned. And I trust in God you will be cautious, and demean yourselves in such manner that your hearts and conduct shall be in concord with and under the spirit of that anthem with which the angels ushered the Only-Begotten into the world, when the multitude of them brake forth and sang *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men.* This is the way to express your thankfulness. And thus let us keep the feast.

S E R M O N XLIX.

I JOHN ii. 3, 4.

And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

I HAVE shewn you, from these words, that a right knowledge or faith is the only principle of true obedience. The obedience here intended is that only which can deserve the name; the obedience of the whole man, beginning in the deliberate choice of the heart, and issuing in a conformity of the conduct with the will of God. Without any knowledge of God at all, that this obedience is impossible, every one sees. But, although God should be perfectly known to be all that he is, yet if he be known only absolutely, that is, without respect to the mediation of Jesus Christ, by us guilty and perverted creatures, there is nothing in that knowledge which could draw over our hearts unto him; nor would that knowledge give us the least power of turning to him: but, on the contrary, the more perfectly we should know God in this absolute manner, the more fearfully we should hate him

for being such a God as he is ; so great and mighty, so eternal and ever-present with us : because, however perfect in himself, we should in all his perfections see him against us, while also he does not communicate unto us any grace (without which we cannot choose his service) but as we look unto him through the Redeemer. Wherefore that knowledge or faith, which constrains the heart unto obedience, is the knowledge of God in Christ ; and this is, and only can be, a principle of obeying God from the heart. Having seen therefore what that knowledge or faith is, which is the principle of real obedience, we will now,

Secondly.—Endeavour to shew that obedience from the heart is the direct proof of such a knowledge or faith ; *We do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.* Here this is manifest, “ That where
“ there is a true knowledge of God in Christ, obe-
“ dience from the heart is the certain and necessary
“ effect of that knowledge.” From which it will follow of consequence,

First.—That obedience from the heart is an infallible proof of the truth of our faith or knowledge. And that therefore,

Secondly.—Where this proof is not, it is a mere lie to say we know God.

The two latter, you observe, are plain consequences from the former. For if the knowledge of God in Christ, and that only (as has been shewn), does necessarily constrain the heart unto obedience, then on

the one side obedience from the heart must prove our knowledge to be of the right sort, and the want of that obedience convince us that we have not that knowledge. The doctrine is,

“ Where there is a true knowledge of God in Christ, obedience from the heart is the certain and necessary effect of it.” And that for these two reasons:—

First.—Because of the incomparable excellency, loveliness, and desirableness of the object. There is that in the blessed God, which, when it is seen (and seen, observe, with self-application, as what we have an interest in), is infinitely suited to engage the heart of any rational creature, whether angel in heaven or sinner upon earth. Devils only may not appropriate God unto themselves, and therefore their knowledge of his excellencies cannot engage their spirits unto him. But when, to say nothing of angels, a sinful man beholds the fair beauty of the Lord in the face of Jesus Christ; beholds him as what he is, a Spirit self-existing, and whose essential property it is to have life in himself; a Spirit filling the universe with his presence, and upholding and directing both it and every thing in it, great and little, by his amazing operation, almighty in his power to do even what he pleases, and everlasting without possibility of decay, while generations and worlds rise up and pass away; a Spirit too to whose free goodness he owes his being, his soul and body, and every enjoyment and means of happiness, nay, and upon whom, though he be a sinner, he can look as *his* God, reconciled by a me-

thod, the glory of which astonishes and dazzles the eyes of the most exalted creatures, while they consider the wisdom, grace, and love, held out in it: I say, when the enlightened sinner thus beholds the fair beauty of the Lord in the face of Jesus, he finds an object before him infinitely suited to engage his heart, whom he cannot choose but love supremely, and delight in, whom he would have to be honoured through the whole creation, whom he thinks it his glory to obey, and besides whom there is none in heaven or earth that he can desire. In the sight of this object sin appears in its true colours of deformity, and holiness in its proper beauty. The whole man stands prepared to obey; and, fixing itself on the revealed will, is asking with cheerfulness, *What wilt thou have me to do?*

Secondly.—The other reason why this knowledge of God begets obedience in the heart is because it was revealed to this very purpose, that the Spirit having enlightened the dark soul in the knowledge of God reconciled in Jesus Christ, might thereby influence and engage the heart unto a conformity with him. Thus, it is said, *Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works* *. And, when God made himself known to Abraham as his God, he speaks thus, *I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect* †. And so, at the giving out of the law, we find God speaking in the

* Titus ii. 14.

† Gen. xvii. 1.

character of a covenant-God as moving us to obedience thereunto, *I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt have no other gods but me* *. And, in short, *The end of the commandment is charity* †; the design and completion of the Gospel is the love of God and our neighbour. Now, if the very purpose of God's thus revealing himself in Jesus Christ was that we might be *sanctified through faith that is in him* ‡, it cannot be that the Spirit should make this revelation of God in the soul, and not thereby form the heart unto obedience. That he does hereby work unto the begetting and nourishing love, in the hearts of all who really know God in Jesus Christ, is expressly assured. St. Paul says of himself, that as soon as ever it pleased the Lord, who had called him by his grace, to appoint him his commission, *he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision* §. He was all readiness, and went directly to his work. And he says elsewhere of himself and all believers, *We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord* ||: where the motive, the agent, and the work, are most plainly marked out and placed together.

From these two reasons it appears, that wherever there is a true knowledge of God in Christ, there obedience from the heart necessarily follows. And you see in what manner it follows; namely, by the glory and loveliness of the object presented to the soul, which, while the mind is regarding and beholding, the

* Exod. xx. 2, 3. † 1 Tim. i. 5. ‡ Acts xxvi. 18.
 § Acts xxvi. 19. || 2 Cor. iii. 18.

Spirit takes occasion by that blessed sight to turn the heart unto God. From hence I must make two very needful remarks.

The *first* is concerning unfruitful knowledge, that it is indeed no knowledge at all; for it does not set up the object in the mind, and so has no effect on the heart. I say it is no real knowledge or faith concerning God. It is not a knowledge of God evangelically seen, for so it would beget love; and it is not a knowledge of God in an absolute view, for then at least it would beget fear. But it begets neither love nor fear, and therefore is not really any knowledge at all. Real knowledge or belief of any thing does unavoidably influence us according to the importance of that thing to us; and, where there is no influence, there is really no belief or knowledge concerning things which are of the very smallest moment to us. So that that state of mind wherein men do neither fear God's wrath, nor love him for his mercy, is plain atheism. There is no real belief or knowledge of God's being in it; although through certain suspicions, taken up by hearsay, and conceived upon the opinions of others, there are oftentimes some disquieting apprehensions raised in the soul. Nevertheless this is evidently the general knowledge of God that is in the world; and this the state of unbelief wherein all lie, till God by his Spirit does begin to make himself known within in the soul. Then he begins to be taken notice of, he is seen as a real object before the eyes of the mind, and the effect on the heart follows in trembling or love, as God is

seen absolutely or through a Redeemer. And this is the awful difference between true and false faith or knowledge.

The *second* remark is concerning true believers. The matter now explained shews us the very reason why they are not more steadfast in their love and obedience; namely, because their knowledge of God in Christ is not enough deep and clear, or not sufficiently impressed on the mind so as to keep the blessed object present therein. Some do not earnestly follow on to know the Lord, what he is in himself, and what in the face of Jesus Christ; and others, when they have obtained some more lively discoveries of the divine glory, are not careful enough to keep them in view. The consequence of which, whether imperfect knowledge or forgetfulness, is, that the heart is without that due influence, which a more distinct and abiding knowledge would maintain upon it; and the goings out of the affections in love, desire, delight, trust, and zeal for the honour and service of God, are cold, unfrequent, and without sufficient strength to keep the soul in a state of readiness for all duty, and of resolute preparedness to repress all the risings of corruption, and to bear up under all temptations and sufferings. So that, if we expect to maintain a healthy, vigorous, active, and advancing state of soul, we must acquaint ourselves with God, and walk in the sense of his presence. Otherwise we suffer a veil to be thrown over our eyes, which hinders us from the only sight by which the Spirit works upon our hearts to engage them unto God.

What we have been saying on this head sufficiently shews that obedience from the heart does necessarily follow a right and true knowledge and faith. And if so, then,

First.—Obedience from the heart is an infallible proof of the truth of our knowledge or faith. For if the knowledge of God in Christ does and can only draw over the heart unto God in a true spirit of obedience, then that obedience from the heart must needs prove such a knowledge or faith to have an actual being, existence, and abidance within us. No man can love, fear, honour, and serve God, without some reason; and whoever really does this can only do it because he knows God in Christ to be infinitely worthy of, and entitled to, all this obedience of the inner and outward man. Do you really love God, and choose to serve him? Observe why you do so. Is it not for that which you see in him, as he hath manifested himself in the face of Jesus Christ? Does he not appear to you there bearing a commanding and amiable character, so that you cannot refuse him your heart and service? And does not every repeated view you take of him in that glass draw out your heart to him afresh? Or is it any thing but such a knowledge of the blessed God which restrains you from indulging your natural inclinations, or engages you to the performance of his will? *Hereby* therefore *you know that you really know him.* Your obedience proves it to your own conscience, because you plainly see that you only love and serve him because you know him to be such a God as he is, and as he has

shewn himself to be in the Gospel. Obedience from the heart then is an infallible proof of a right knowledge or faith; it issues from it; and, were the actings of the mind observed, would be evidently seen to do so. This, I say, infallibly proves the knowledge or faith to be real, for, if it were not so, it could not possibly produce any such fruits of obedience. Nay, and the habit and course of obedience necessarily proves the faith to be more than a mere hasty notion, and to have a subsistence in the mind, because it does habitually work by love. So that if we do really love God, and from our hearts obey him, we may hereby assuredly know that we know him. Here then the point of importance is before us; do we know God in Christ? If we do, we obey him from the heart. If we obey him from the heart, we know that we know him. This is the order; and we must take heed we do not confound it; neither seeking to obey God without knowing him in Christ, which is impossible, nor conceiting that we know him in Christ if we do not obey him, which is a lie. This leads to the other consequence of this doctrine; namely,

Secondly.—*If we say we know him, and keep not his commandments, we lie.* You see how plain and peremptory the Apostle is. To say we know God in Christ, and not to obey him, is a mere lie. Well, then, I fear there are many liars in the world; for it is too evident that there are many who profess to know God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, who are very far from keeping God's commandments, take

no manner of care to do so, indeed are with the utmost carelessness breaking them every day. But how is this a lie ?

Why, *First*, It is a lie, because the thing is absolutely false in itself. They who do not obey God do not know him, have actually no faith or knowledge of God in Christ in them ; and, if they say they have, they say that which is not true : for it has been shewn incontestably, that, wherever that knowledge of God is, it brings forth obedience to him ; so that, where the obedience is not, there the faith cannot be.

And, *Secondly*, It is a lie, because the person who says it knows it to be no other ; for, while he says that he does know God, he is very sensible in his own conscience that he does not know him. Will a man seriously say that he certainly and steadfastly knows God to be a holy, jealous, and almighty Being, privy to all his conduct, and to whom he is accountable, when at the same time he finds no fear of him in his heart, though he be acting in such a manner as is exactly suited to provoke him ? Or, again, that he knows God to be reconciled, merciful, infinitely good and gracious, and in all the fulness of his eternal perfections *his* God, when he does not at the same time love him ? The truth is, God is not an object whom we may know as we do a thousand other things, with which we have little or no concern. We are so related to him, and our happiness or misery are so wrapped up in his favour or displeasure, that, the very moment we know him to be what he is, our hearts feel the impression of that knowledge in fear or love as we

behold him against us or for us. And therefore for a man to say, I know God, when he neither fears nor loves him, is to assert what he absolutely knows to be false: for he knows very well that he does not know God to be that God he is, that he does not know him to be that almighty, eternal, and ever-present Being, who is about his path and bed, and spieth out all his ways, in whose favour is life, and his frown hell; for when at any time he should reflect on what is laid up in his mind, he would find no such knowledge of God there. So that if any man should dare to say, I know God in his absolute character, when he does not fear him, and, much more, I know him in Jesus Christ, when he does not obey him from the heart; he ventures to say what he knows to be false, and the truth is not in him.

Consider therefore, sinners, who live after the courses of the world, and have no heart to serve the Lord, that you are altogether faithless, and in fact as ignorant of the true God as are the Heathen who have not your advantages. You profess to know God, but in works you deny him, and therefore you know him not. You may conceit, perhaps, something from your supposed knowledge; but that conceit is, you find, a lie. It is proved to be so every day by your conduct; and how dreadfully will it be proved to be no better another day? O sirs, consider how dreadful it will be for you to go down to the grave with this lie in your hand, and then to have it proved to be such before the tribunal of Christ, in the presence of the assembled world, to your inconceivable

confusion, and to the utter loss of your soul in the fire that never shall be quenched!

The conclusion of the whole is, let us all acquaint ourselves with God. Gloriously has he unfolded his perfections and will in the Gospel. There let us look, even on God manifest in the flesh; nor ever take off our eyes, till in that glass we see God awful in justice, rich in mercy, unsearchable in wisdom, and the ever-blessed object takes our hearts along with it, transforming them into a conformity therewith in love, and desire, and holy fear, and the most complacential obedience. So shall we know that we know him in this world, and be assured of our interest in him, and be prepared for the enjoyment of him in the world that is to come. To which most blessed knowledge of God, may he vouchsafe to bring us all.

S E R M O N L.

ROMANS i. 16.

I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ : for it is the power of God. unto salvation to every one that believeth.

AMONG the various things which hinder us from embracing, or living agreeably to the Gospel, shame is not the least considerable ; and without question has been the occasion of forcing back many from receiving a Saviour, whose followers are of that sect which is every where spoken against, and has perhaps more or less restrained all from that freedom and boldness of profession which their Bibles and consciences have demanded of them. It is indeed an easy matter for a proud heart to say, I would not regard what people should say of me : but when we come to make the word of God the rule of our conduct, and not the ways and customs of the world, as hereby we become *singular*, so we find the dread of particularity has a force we were not before aware of. If the Gospel of Christ be designed to reform the world, it must needs follow that the unreformed part of the world is in a state directly *contrary* to the Gospel ; and while these

make up the bulk of mankind in every place, the general countenance will be on their side; and the few, who will venture to have more religion than the fashion of the times allows, must incur the censure of being odd and particular. Their lot must be the same with those of the same good character in the day of Amos, *They hate him that reproveth in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly* *. If the Gospel was to lie a dead letter, a wicked world would find no fault with it: but whenever it appears in its power, and is manifested in the life, it makes the minds of the children of this world too uneasy to permit them to leave the professors of it at quiet. You may be particular as you please on any other head: nobody is hurt, and so no one blames. But here, as soon as you are particular by living conformably to the Gospel, all about you are troubled, cannot treat you with cordiality, but at last lose all conscience, and you find yourself become the object of dislike even where you have the greatest desire to please. It is no little matter therefore not to be ashamed of the Gospel, and consequently a point worthy our particular consideration. *I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.* From which words we may treat of these two things:—

First.—When we may be said not to be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.

Secondly.—Why we should not be ashamed of it.

* Amos v. 10.

First.—We may inquire when we may be said not to be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. And this is the case,

First.—When we *own it*. We are ashamed of that we dare not own: but what we avow, we cannot be said to be ashamed of. To own Christ is to let the world see you belong to him. This is confession of Christ before men. But if you would be Christ's, yet decline acting in such a manner as to be thought his, you do not confess him, you deny him before men, and are plainly ashamed of him. The question is not whether you have more or less an inward shame upon your heart; but whether you oppose that sinful shame of your heart, lament it, and are not restrained by it from owning Christ and his words. In that case it is plain enough you confess him; and that you do it in direct contradiction to the strivings of your own spirit argues evidently that you prefer his honour to your own. Now it must be observed that all of us either own or disown the Gospel; we must do the one or the other: and I am sure it behoves us to consider whether of the two we do. Do we own Christ to be the only Saviour of the world, and are all that know us acquainted with our steadfast persuasion that there is salvation in none other, that all the liberality, harmlessness, honesty, and sobriety in the world, will not bring any man to heaven, but that only through the merits of the Redeemer we can have the least ground of hope toward God? And do they know also that we avow the words of Christ, and the way of a Gospel-life, and hold ourselves and

all others obliged to walk as Christ also walked, though in the world yet above it ; in a spiritual, not a carnal life ; and under the influence of a prevailing concern for God's glory in the world, and of an unfeigned regard for the salvation of our neighbours ? Is this the reckoning others make of us ? Then it is plain we must have owned Christ and his words. But if the world does not thus think of us, and we pass for those that are of the world, for those who will do as do others, and are not for more religion than is common, it is not less manifest in that case that we have not owned the Gospel ; a little inquiry into our conduct may convince us we have disowned it ; and it is but too plain that we have been held in the fetters of a worldly shame of the Gospel of Christ.

Secondly.—We are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ when we live agreeably to it. And whatever profession we otherwise make of it, however bold we may be to own it, and however warmly we may contend for it, yet, if we do not live it, all is but false fire, it is manifest that we do not love it, and our contention for the Gospel is not for the Gospel's sake, but our own, for the sake of our own pride and vanity. We act under a mistaken zeal, propped up by passion, self, and conceit ; and, were these false props taken away, should find it as hard a matter for us as for our neighbours not to be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. I am not contending for cowardice and hiding the head, nor do I in the least desire to restrain that pure zeal which is begotten by humility, faith, and love : but since there is such a thing as mistaken zeal,

vastly apt to deceive those who are under the guidance of it into a good, if not a high, opinion of their state, for this very reason, because they are bold in owning the Gospel, I am observing that all such confession as is not accompanied with a Gospel-life is not owning Christ, but self. *If I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, I am nothing**. If, while we are not ashamed to own the Gospel, we be careful to live it, and to shew the regard we bear to it by the effect it has upon our hearts and lives, engaging us to a conduct wherein by the belief of the things revealed and promised, and conferred in Jesus Christ, we are manifestly influenced to a pure, holy, and self-denying conversation, then we may be assured that we are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. If we live as becometh the Gospel in the midst of an adulterous world, then there can be no question concerning the matter, it is plain that we are not ashamed of it.

Thirdly.—If we are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, we shall endeavour to *recommend* it to the world. When people are not for making a shew of religion, as they will perversely call all profession, but industriously keep to themselves the little piety they think themselves possessed of, no way reproving the works of darkness, but fashioning their behaviour after the smooth easy way of the times; such as these are perfectly strangers to a Gospel spirit, understand not the force of the precept, *Let your light shine before men*, and have struck out of Christianity the

* 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

two glorious distinguishing principles of it, *concern for God's honour, and for the souls of others*: so under the cloak of a false humility, and dread of ostentation, they are chained down, enslaved, and actuated by a worldly shame of the Gospel of Christ. Whereas they who are not ashamed of it, but glory in it, will desire and endeavour it may spread for the common welfare and for the glory of its Author, nor will be wanting to use their influence (whatever it be) toward promoting and enlarging it. And while they are so doing, they will not be without a proof that they are opposing the natural shame of their hearts under the influence of an evangelical spirit of zeal and charity.

Fourthly.—It will be a good mark of our not being ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, if we are not *ashamed of any*, because they are ill-liked by others for living in conformity with it. It was a strong symptom of subjection to worldly shame in Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night, that no one should know it; but it was a sign of a better spirit in Lydia, when she received Paul and Silas into her house. When Peter denied that he knew Christ, his worldly apprehensions had got the better of him; but when he afterwards bore witness to his Master in the face of the Jewish council, grace prevailed against nature. When men are run down by the world for following Christ and their consciences according to the Scripture rule, then to stand up in their defence, and not to disown or give them up to a general outcry, is manifestly to shew we are not under the guidance of worldly shame.

What has been said may suffice to teach us when

we are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. I am now to shew,

Secondly. — The reason here alleged why we should not be ashamed of it. *For it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.* What we are to understand by the Gospel's being the *power of God unto salvation* may be learnt from the same expression in the second Epistle to the Corinthians, *The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds**. The Gospel is mighty through God, or powerful through God, to the pulling down of strong holds. So the sense of the passage before us is, the Gospel is efficacious through the might and power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. And if it be the only means of salvation, and is made effectual to salvation by the power of God, we need not be ashamed of it, but rather ought exceedingly, and above all things, to glory in it. Here are two arguments for our glorying in and not being ashamed of the Gospel:

First.—It is the only means of salvation.

Secondly.—It is made effectual to the salvation of those that believe, by the *power of God*.

First.—We need not be ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the only *means* of salvation. The Gospel is the remedy for man's misery. It has healing under its wings. Its healing qualities are manifest, it brings with it pardon and peace, grace and glory. Look

* 2 Cor. x. 3.

upon yourself. What are you? Are you not a man of sorrows? does not disappointment come to you with every hour? are you not complaining of bodily infirmity? is not the grave opening its mouth to receive you, and moulder you into your original dust? And are you not a sinner too as well as a mortal man, and have you no apprehensions from that side? if you fear not God's present judgments, have you no dread of his future? have you no shrinking at the thought of a judgment-day and an eternal world? Now where will you fix your foot? Alas! you can turn no whither but to the Gospel. And does that make ample provision for all your complaints? It does; it proclaims to you free pardon, it promises you the communications of divine grace and love, it discovers to you another life, and therein a body no more capable of pain, sickness, or corruption, a soul purged from sin, and in both a happy eternity with God in a new heaven and a new earth. It presents all these glorious things to us as unquestionably certain, being procured by the transactions of the Son of God, according to the purpose of the covenant of grace, devised and determined before the worlds were made. I beseech you, my dear friends, is this a thing for a man to be ashamed of? Does it become a sinful creature, for whose sake the eternal God has prepared it, to be ashamed of such a work of God as this? Angels ushered Jesus into the world with songs of triumph, and shall we be ashamed of him? ashamed to own him who cometh to us, bringing salvation so great, so full, so eternal? Shall we be ashamed of his very

name, ashamed to be thought his disciples? through shame shall we betray his interests, and shun any for belonging to him? What! is there any other Saviour? is the great God our Saviour one to be ashamed of? or is the salvation he proposes to us such as may justly be treated with ridicule by a lost world, or which we should forbear to own, to practise, to recommend and encourage, because sinful men are so obstinate that they will not receive it? Did our Apostle thus regard it? Who can express the glorying of his heart in a Gospel, which, through the merits of his honoured Master, *was the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth?* He confessed it, lived it, carried it from kingdom to kingdom in the face of every persecution which men or devils could raise against him; he was the friend, the father, of all that embraced it. He was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. It was the *Gospel*, glad tidings of salvation; it was the Gospel of Jesus his adored Lord and God: he could not be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.

But, *Secondly*.—We need not be ashamed of the Gospel, because it is made effectual by the power of God to the salvation of those that believe. Sufficient as the Gospel is to salvation in itself, it is not effectually salvation to any soul to whom it is not immediately made so by the power of God stirring up the heart to receive it and obey it. It is the power of God that makes it effectual; just as much the power of God that begets a lively faith in the heart of a sinner, as it was the power of God that made man out

of the ground. The one is as much God's creation as the other, and so the latter is often called in the New Testament. *We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus* *. *The new man after God is created in righteousness* †. Now when God manifests his power in renewing and quickening the dead hearts of sinners through the Gospel, when it is his own work, when hereby he declares the Gospel to be from himself, and does in so wonderful a manner own and honour it, ought we to be ashamed of that Gospel which God so gloriously sets his mark upon as *his*? The Gospel, thus made alive by the power of God, is his witness of himself among fallen men, and ought to be revered wherever it comes, or however mean the subject be in whom it appears. What shall we say then, if, while some despise, others are ashamed of the work of God? a work so condescending in the Majesty of heaven, a work so infinitely valuable in regard of us! It is the Gospel God owns, he owns nothing else by making it the means of holiness and salvation. There are many pretended schemes of religion, but God bears witness to none of them, by none of them doth he work to convert and save a soul; this honour he reserves for his own contrivance, the Gospel, which alone he makes effectual to the saving of those who believe. It was in these views that our Apostle so greatly boasted in the Gospel. And whoever sees as he did, that it is God who gives effect to the preaching of it, exerting his power upon

* Ephes. ii. 10.

† Col. iii. 10.

the hearts of sinners to awaken them out of their natural state of sin, convincing them of their misery, and of his mercy in Jesus Christ, conforming them to his mind and image, and enabling them, in the spirit of meekness, humility, zeal, and charity, to lead a heavenly life upon earth, will, no more than St. Paul, be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.

From the two considerations proposed to us in this second head, we may learn these two things for practice.

First.—We may see here the reason of being ashamed of the Gospel to lie in this, that we do not as we ought steadfastly believe it to be the means and only means of salvation, and that it is effectually made so by the power and operation of God. The world of mankind slights the Gospel because otherwise engaged, yea, and dislikes the Gospel because all its proposals are of a spiritual nature; insensible of their danger without it, they have never made account of its offers of pardon; and, in love with sin, they have not relished its precepts of holiness. Others, brought to some sight of their want of the Gospel, have never been made certainly to believe its truth, nor clearly to behold its glory, and so have wanted a purpose of heart to renounce the world, and, having stopped short, have been kept back by a shame of the Gospel of Christ from the profession and practice of it. Wherefore,

Secondly.—If you will get above this sinful shame of the Gospel, own it, live it, recommend and encourage it in the face of the world, and get more above the inward shame of it also; there is but this one

way to such desirable liberty, that we steadfastly *believe* it. What made our Apostle not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ? He tells us it was this only, that he was fully assured it was the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. We must grow in our belief of it and acquaintance with it; be sensible we do not believe it enough, or know sufficiently its glories, while we are yet any way ashamed of it; and must search deeper into the mysteries of that noble work of God, by which himself is glorified and sinners saved. Look upon it in all its sufficiency of salvation, consider it as the only means whereby yourself may be saved, endeavour it may have a more effectual abiding and transforming influence upon your heart, especially see that God in almighty power bears witness to it by word and deed as a scheme contrived before the worlds were made, and to have its full effect when they shall be no more; and, as you advance into this certain knowledge of the Gospel, you will not be ashamed of it, but in life and death it will be all your desire and all your boast, as *the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.*

S E R M O N L I.

HEBREWS ii. 3.

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation ?

YOU sons and daughters of fallen Adam ; you mortal men, whose days are numbering out, who are quickly to return to the dust out of which you were taken, yet whose existence must be as the days of heaven ; you all are soon to undergo an important change. You know your time is short, you are departing, passing over the stage, and shortly to disappear, your place here to know you again no more for ever. The world then what a bubble ! the gaieties and enjoyments of it what a cheat ! the supports of it what a broken reed ! the comforts of it what a vexation ! the honours of it what a vanity ! the wealth of it what a bauble ! *This* death will demonstrate against all who gainsay it ; death, that closes the eyes on every earthly thing, and opens them to another, a new, a spiritual, an eternal scene. O what a sight presents itself to the soul the very moment it leaves the body ! Who can conceive what it shall be to go into that new state, where every visible thing shall be no longer seen, neither man, nor beast, nor house, nor sun, nor

earth, to be met with? A world of spirits, nothing but spirits! How will all things then appear! What a glorious object the blessed God to the saint; how terrible to the sinner! Heaven, how lovely to the one; hell, how dreadful to the other! But whither am I carrying you? To views great, awful, and interesting indeed. Who can think of them without astonishment? Yet they ought to be thought of. It is the true business of life to think of them; to think of ourselves as men ready to die, and whose work is to work out salvation while we live; to think of our latter end, and of the eternal things that are hastening upon us, that we may not lose ourselves, our eternal selves, in pursuing the vain, deceitful, gratifications of time. I am sure God has thought of them for us graciously, and provided a most glorious salvation for us, which he would have the object of our thought and care, that, whenever we depart hence, we may be happy to all eternity. To enforce this salvation upon you, to plead with you by the *greatness* of it, and by the *danger* of *neglecting* it, is my present design from the words read. *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?* In which words these three things are manifestly contained:—

First.—The greatness of Gospel salvation.

Secondly.—That we are too apt to neglect it.

Thirdly.—The danger of so doing.

First.—Consider the greatness of this Gospel salvation: in every view of it great. Its *end*, *subject*, *means*, *fulness*, considered, a great salvation.

Its *end* great: namely, the manifestation of God's

grace and love. The end of *all* God's doings is his own glory, the ascertaining his rights, and displaying his perfections. So his own glory was the great end of salvation wrought by the Redeemer; he meant to vindicate his sovereignty, to magnify his justice and holiness, to illustrate his wisdom and power, and to manifest his infinite good will. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace**, or that the praise of his grace might be magnified. The end of his adopting us through Christ is, that angels and men might glorify his grace. Our Apostle was commissioned to *preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, and let all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world had been hid in God: to the intent that now (not to men only, but even) unto the principalities and powers (angelical) might be known (and magnified) by (his dispensations to) the church the manifold wisdom of God †*. This was a great end, and gives a wonderful importance to the vast transaction of man's salvation. Indeed God's other perfections were magnified by this scheme, but the main design was to do honour to his grace and love. The work of creation displays and glorifies God's power, that of providence his wisdom, and that of vengeance on sinners his justice; but that of redemption puts them all toge-

* Ephes. i. 3, 5, 6. † iii. 8, 9, 10.

ther, illustriously sets forth his justice, wisdom, and power; while its principal aim is the manifestation of God's infinite love. And is not that salvation great, which is designed for so great an end, the greatest end that can be, the maintaining God's peculiar glory, and devised by himself for so great a purpose?

Again, *First*.—"The greatness of this salvation " appears from the *subject* of it," *man*. Consider man in a natural state, his nature sunk into apostacy, destitute of every tendency towards God, yea, disposed to hate him, to hate his being and all his perfections, to hate his dominion and law, to hate his providence and presence; and possessed with all manner of sinful tendencies on the contrary part, having in his fallen nature the seeds of all manner of sensuality, and every kind of spiritual filthiness; pride, conceit, disobedience, self-will; and, because thus depraved, guilty of treason against the most High, and under the irreversible sentence of the divine curse: yea, by nature also blind and ignorant, yet averse to be taught; hardened and senseless, therefore careless about recovery; weak and helpless, yet unwilling to be succoured: withal a subject to Satan's kingdom, open to all his devices, and living in the midst of every thing pleasing to the natural heart. To avert the eternal wrath such a sinner deserves, and which the righteous God will not otherwise in any degree remit, by making ample satisfaction to infinite justice; to effect a perfect reconciliation for such a sinner with the most holy God; to rectify corrupt nature, and fashion again man's soul to the

temper of a creature, and the constitution of a servant, and that in full opposition to man's natural lords, the devil, the world, and the flesh; to perfect this work day by day, in contradiction to our strange obstinacy, wilfulness, heedlessness, forgetfulness, and sloth, till the entire image of God be completed, and sinful nature utterly destroyed; to spiritualize the body too as well as the soul, to make this mortal immortal, this corruptible incorruptible, this dishonourable glorious, this weakness power, this animal spiritual; to defeat sin and death, and hell and devils; so as that, in the day of redemption (to say the least), he who was once a sinner shall appear as if he had never sinned, holy as if he had never been corrupted, alive as if he had never been mortal, respected by the God of heaven as if he had never offended; why, sirs, what a work is this! to form that stupendous fabric, the universe, was not a greater. So vast an undertaking surpasses the strength and capacity of united angels and archangels. It is an enterprise too great for any but God only; *He saw there was no man, and wondered there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him, and his righteousness it sustained him* *.

Secondly.—“Great also is this salvation in the means of it.” The work was great, so were the means. Justice, holiness, and majesty, all infinite and divine, must be satisfied, reconciled, magnified; yet the sinner must be saved from wrath, accepted

* Isaiah lix. 16.

to favour, cleansed from corruption, sanctified and glorified. Who is sufficient for these things? He that undertook the work. But to think of the wonderful method he devised for the purpose! who can forbear crying out at the sight of it, *O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out**! I say, to think of the means used to effect our salvation, how great the work of salvation is represented therein. To think of God in Trinity consulting before the worlds were, “Let us save man!” To think of the covenant of peace then devised, ordered in all things and sure; to think, I say, of the whole Trinity engaged in this undertaking, of the Father sending the Son, the Son coming into the world, and the Holy Ghost rendering effectual what the Son had wrought; or to trace out more minutely the various steps of this vast transaction; to consider the promises from of old that engaged for it, the prophecies that foretold it, the various dispensations from the days of Abraham that introduced it, and the whole constitution of the Jewish state that prefigured and led to it; to behold him who was *in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God, making himself of no reputation, taking upon him the form of a servant, condescending to the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, humbling himself, and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross †*. To con-

* Rom. xi. 33.

† Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8.

template the adorable way of saving sinners by his death, and justifying them by his righteousness; to follow the Holy Ghost through all his sanctifying and sealing operations, how he arrests and convinces the hearts of sinners in the full career of sin and indulgence, makes them obedient to the faith in despite of the strong pleadings which pride and love of the world make to the contrary, and daily adds to their graces and subdues their corruptions; to lay the whole of the means together, whereby this salvation is wrought, is by various degrees to go up to still higher apprehensions of the greatness of the work.

Finally, This salvation is great in its *completeness and fulness*; it answers all the demands of God, and all the wants of the sinner. God beholds it with approbation, and says of it, as of his other works, *It is very good*; Jesus regards it with satisfaction and complacency, and says, *It is finished*; the Spirit rejoices in it as concurrently the work of his hands; angels adore, and *desire to look into it*; believers, too, take up their word, and say, *This is all my salvation*. Justice infinite has nothing to gainsay, infinite Holiness makes no objection. It stops the mouth of Unbelief, and stills the cry of Conscience. It washes away sins of the most scarlet die, and cleanses the most corrupted heart. It is peace and joy now; it is glory unfading, incorruptible, eternal, hereafter. It breaks the bars of death, shuts the mouth of hell, and opens the doors of heaven. It is all a sinner can want or wish; it is all he can desire or conceive, and ten thousand times more. None of all the rational world but malignant

devils murmur at it, as it robs them of their spoil, and senseless sinners only disregard it. All in this salvation is full and complete; nothing can be added to it; in time and eternity it is perfect. Every part of it is perfect, and the whole is perfect. It perfectly glorifies God, and perfectly saves man. It has brought earth and heaven together here, and will make them one for ever. Like the work of creation, every the smallest member of it is perfect, and the whole, as the universe, complete. Say, then, how great a salvation is this, which answers every purpose and demand of God, and every possible need of man! O, my friends, have you no hearts to rejoice in this grand, complete, and finished salvation? Shall not that which so amply provides for God's glory and your happiness draw forth your gratitude and praises?

Well, on the whole, now, I suppose you may be convinced this is a great salvation. And if it be, may it not be proper to inquire,

Secondly.—Whether we do not neglect it? That none regard it according to its real worth and excellence is evident. They who know it best, and esteem it most, and walk after it the most strictly, do yet know, love, and follow it unworthily; and so must be said in a degree to neglect it. And these will need always to be stirred up, that they neglect not so great salvation. But the text seems rather a warning to those who make none or very little account of this salvation. And therefore, that the exhortation afterwards to follow may be more seriously applied by such as do indeed neglect this salvation, and render it use-

less to themselves, I will describe in a few words what it is to neglect this salvation.

And this is in *general* to make light of it, as it is described in the parable of the marriage-feast. They who were bidden took no care to come, *They made light of it, and went their way, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise* *. Every man had somewhat else to do, which he liked better, or thought of more importance. When a man goes on his way, minding his earthly things, not caring about salvation, nor thinking it worth while to be at any great pains about it, but passing it by as if it were not his concern, and putting off the thought of it for a season, then it is plain he slights and despises it, and must be allowed to neglect it. More particularly,

First.—You neglect this salvation, when you use not due pains to find out your want of it. We all absolutely want this salvation: but it is manifest many of you are but little sensible of the want of it. Now, I beseech you, whose fault is this but your own? Why, you have never taken any pains to see how greatly you want it. You know you have not. You have not allowed yourself time to think of your state, and to search out your sins; you will not retire to meditate on death and judgment; you do not pray, nor read God's word with any desire of knowing your miserable condition; and so you live on in a wilful unconcernedness about your soul. Now what is this but neglecting salvation? I am sure you would

* Matt. xxii. 5.

reckon this negligence, should you act thus in your worldly affairs; and I suppose none would wonder in such case should you fall into poverty, or lay the blame on any thing but your own negligence.

Secondly.—You neglect this salvation, if you do not labour to be acquainted with it. Your heart and life are not influenced by the Gospel-salvation; why? Because you do not know it, and use no pains to know it. You do not search the Scripture yourself, nor confer about it with others, nor attend the public ministry of the word as often as opportunity offers; so you remain in ignorance. And is it to be thought that this will excuse you? You cannot think so yourselves. Have you not means? And do not you slight them? And is not your ignorance owing to that? And what can you call this but neglecting salvation?—But another perhaps is saying in his heart, I know this salvation, and am well acquainted with my duty; yet,

Thirdly.—You will be found to neglect this salvation, if you do not practise what you know of it. A man may know much, yet do little: which is the sure way to be beaten with many stripes. It is a knowledge that proceeds from the head into the heart and life which is a saving knowledge. Suppose you know you are a sinner, yet your heart is not humbled to a suitable sense of your lost condition: or you know who Christ is, and what he has done for sinners, yet do not heartily come to him to be saved: or say, you know what the new creature is, but do not strive to attain unto it, but go forward in

a mere self-conceited formality; what doth your knowledge, and what do your attendances, profit? You evidently neglect this great salvation.

Fourthly.—If you do not value this salvation above all things, you put a slight upon it, and neglect it. You neglect it, if you esteem any thing in the world in comparison with it. *If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life, he cannot be my disciple**. You see there must be no comparison. Christ must be dearer than all; yea, and a man must set such a value upon him as to be ready to part with all things rather than disgrace Christ, or go without his favour. Now it is no uncommon thing, I suppose, that a man would have Christ, yet will retain one thing or other which he will not quit for his sake. He would have part in this great salvation, but it must be in his own way, with a reserve against certain self-denying practices, and world-denying duties. What can be plainer than that in such case this salvation is neglected, and has a slight put upon it? Many are hasty to say, *Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest*; but when the mortifying work comes on, then it is, *Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father*. *Lord, let me first go bid them farewell which are at home at my house* †. Such are looking back, and not fit for the kingdom of God; for they manifestly slight and neglect it.

And thus, having marked out to you who they are

* Luke xiv. 26.

† ix. 57.

that neglect this salvation, I am at liberty to enforce, as was proposed in the

Third place, The danger of neglecting so great salvation. How shall we escape, if we do?

First.—How shall we escape the curse of the law, if we neglect this salvation? If we slight this salvation, and let it slip through our hands, is there any other way of being saved? People may fancy what they will, and please themselves with delusions propagated by Satan in the world, that all shall be well though they walk in the imaginations of their hearts; may conceit I know not what of God's mercy, and that he will not cause to perish so many of his creatures as must perish if the Gospel be the only way of salvation, and they only shall be saved who follow that way; I say, people may suffer their lusts and the devil to cheat them at this rate; but, after all, what shall we make of such plain declarations as this of the text to the contrary—"How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" As much as to say, "We shall never be able to escape, there is but this one way under the sun; and, if we will not take this, there is absolutely no escaping for us." *Escape!* Consider the very word, it supposes us in imminent peril, beset with dangers, and flying for our lives. And that is the very truth of our case; for we have sinned, and cursed is every one that hath done so. Who will say he hath not? But Christ was made a curse for us; and if we will fly to him for refuge, escaping for our lives, the curse shall not light upon us; for there is no condemnation to them that are

in Christ Jesus: but, if not, the sentence is gone forth, and he that believeth not is condemned already.

But, *Secondly*.—The words have yet a more awful sense. How shall we escape? That is, how dreadfully shall we perish! Questions in Scripture do usually import their contraries in the strongest manner. How shall we escape? It is an argument drawn from comparison with the certain punishment of those who transgressed Moses' law; as appears from the foregoing verse. *If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? If they were surely and justly punished for transgressing the word spoken by angels, how much more shall we be punished for slighting and disobeying this great salvation, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness? We shall perish without plea or excuse in our mouths; we shall perish with a great destruction, because the salvation we had neglected is so great. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment suppose ye shall he be thought worthy? How shall he die without mercy, and under how manifold witnesses, who has despised and neglected the Gospel, so great a salvation? Be pleased only to step forward in your thoughts to that day, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not*

the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. It follows, *They shall be punished with everlasting destruction* *. For what? *For not obeying the Gospel*; for neglecting so great salvation. Then the greatness of this salvation shall be fully opened to them, and they shall be found to have added to all their other damning sins this most damning of all, neglecting and slighting the Gospel. How confounded and ashamed will they then be, when the greatness of this salvation shall appear before them, and they shall be made to see how the glory of God's love moved it, and how it was devised for the salvation of sinners, what amazing means were found out to effect it, and how full and complete a salvation it was? Surely, sinners, you shall wonder and perish at the sight; and must acquiesce in the sentence, though the Judge say to you, "Thy blood be upon thine own head. Depart from me, accursed!"

Surely then we should bethink ourselves betimes, while it is yet to-day, lest we fall into this condemnation. And I beseech you let us all do it. For why will you die? Is it not better for us to live than to die? Is not God's blessing better for us than his curse, and heaven than hell? We have the means in our hands, salvation, great salvation; so great salvation that one cannot think of it without astonishment. Only let us see if we do not *want* it. Why the greatness of the salvation shews how very greatly we want it. And if we want it, it is ready for us, it waits upon us. Be

* 2 Thess. i. 9.

sure there be no delay any longer, lest, while we sleep, the night and the bridegroom come, the day of salvation end, and the door of mercy be shut against us : and then how shall we escape if we have neglected so great salvation ?

S E R M O N LII.

ACTS xxvi. 28.

Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuaded me to be a Christian.

AGRIPPA was *almost* (alas! *but almost*) persuaded to be a Christian. What a pity, that, being so near the kingdom of heaven, he should not enter into it! that when his foot was now at the door, and a step forward had brought him into Immanuel's land, he should have stopped short! Doubtless some monstrous form presented itself to his mind that moment, and forced him back; somewhat inconceivably formidable stood against him, and confounded his purpose: It must have put on an appearance more terrible than hell; or perhaps it wore an enchanting aspect, and seemed more desirable than heaven. *He was almost persuaded*; there he stopped. When almost persuaded, it was but a little way to be persuaded *altogether*: yet to that he never attained. And what did his almost persuasion avail, but to render his condition more inexcusable, his misery more deplorable? Being but almost persuaded, he had no part in Christ; being almost persuaded, he lost Christ with peculiar guilt.

What has been may be. Possibly Agrippa's case may be the case of some of us. We may have been *almost* persuaded to be Christians, but may have wanted the heart to be *really* such. The case of hardened sinners, who have no pretence of having done any thing for their souls, is out of the question. But few, possibly none, will own themselves to be of this graceless character; but will fancy they have something to say for themselves, and maintain some hope that they may do well in another world. So that, when I am speaking to the almost Christian, I shall at the same time necessarily take in those, who, though they have never done any thing toward becoming Christians, yet will be depending upon false foundations. To treat this subject clearly it will be proper,

First.—To consider when we are *entirely* persuaded to be Christians.

Secondly.—When we are but *almost* persuaded to be so.

Thirdly.—What hinders those who are almost persuaded to be Christians from being so altogether. Let us consider then,

First.—When we are entirely persuaded to be Christians. It is my endeavour always to speak in the most intelligible manner, and to bring what I have to say into a determinate *point* that may be easily seen, to the end that you may not be puzzled by a variety of matter and of distinctions. Accordingly, here, though there be a thousand things which are descriptive of a real Christian, I shall speak only of one, the leading principle upon which all the rest turns, and

that is a *renewed will*. When a man's will is wrought upon to choose God *steadily* and *universally*, then he is persuaded to be a Christian altogether. And this is the grand matter and the principal point by which all is determined. Let a man go what lengths he will, if his will be not brought to fix upon God, he stops short, and nothing is done. And he that is really brought unto God has his will so *fixed*. You must take special notice, fixed *steadily* with an abiding determination; not in a sudden heat, not in hasty wishes, not in sudden resolutions, however fervent they may seem to be for the present; but upon a deliberate choice and free consent, *founded* upon a discovery of God's excellencies in himself, and his right in us, and *proved* to be a real choice by the perseverance of the soul in seeking after God; serving him, liking him, and endeavouring to be more closely united to him. And then also there is an *universal* choice, choosing God in every respect as the great good of the soul; choosing him to rule over us, and to make us happy, in a preference to and rejection of all idols; choosing his *will* as the only rule of our conduct, in opposition to all our own inclinations, and his *favour* as our only support and comfort, instead of all the confidences and comforts of this present world.

Nothing I think can be plainer, than that the person, whose will is thus determined and fixed upon God, is a *real* Christian, has had a real change wrought upon him, and that God has put into such an one the *new heart*. I say God has put it into him, for this

choice and change is of God's operation. Concerning which it will be needful to observe, that it is expressly said in Scripture, *God worketh in us to will* *; and that we are *born again of the Spirit* †: which turning of the will is effected by a concurrence of the most persuasive arguments, and a divine, secret, almighty operation. The change is wrought by the power of God; yet he effects it by means of such convincing arguments, that our choice is with the utmost freedom and consent. First, he influences the sinner in a way of persuasion, representing to his mind the misery of an apostate state, and proposing himself to him to be his God in such a display of his loveliness, loving-kindness, eternity, power, and all perfection, that the creature sees there is nothing but vanity and misery out of God, and all happiness in him. And while God does thus cause his glory to pass before the sinner in the most persuasive manner, he does powerfully enable his will to determine and settle upon God by a mighty and converting operation. The man is dealt with (you see) as a reasonable creature, and his choice is wrought upon the most convincing arguments, and with the freest consent, so that he does not lose the freedom of his will in making choice of God, though it be God that worketh in him thus to fix and determine his choice upon such prevailing considerations.

You see by this time what it is to be persuaded to be a Christian; that it is to be wrought upon by the ar-

* Philip ii. 13.

† John iii. 5.

guments and enabled by the grace of the Gospel to choose God, to serve and enjoy him steadily and universally; that is, in an abiding and unlimited determination of the *will* or *heart*. Pass we on, therefore,

Secondly.—To consider when we are but almost persuaded to be Christians. And this is certainly the case when we stop short of giving up the *will* and *heart* to God in the manner now described. Where this is not, there is no true Christian; the foundation is wanting, all is unsound, and, whatever be the appearances, Christ has no part in us. In general therefore it must be laid down that a man is but almost persuaded to be a Christian, who is not persuaded and wrought upon to give himself unto God in the steady and universal renunciation of all idols. Yet a man may go a great way in religious matters, who never yet attains to a true change of heart and choice of God.

Now here, waving the consideration of all such characters as have no tendency towards being Christians indeed, and therefore the cases of the careless sinner and the presuming formalist, who have never yet approached to being almost persuaded to be Christians, I remark,

First.—A man may have been exercised with great terrors of conscience, and dread of God's wrath, who was never persuaded to be a Christian. This was the case of that primitive reprobate Cain; under the sense of God's indignation inflicted upon his conscience, he cries out, *My punishment is greater than I can bear**.

* Gen. iv. 13.

A man may have a very hell in his conscience (witness the traitor Judas), who has not a spark of grace there. Such preparatory convictions of conscience, which often lead to a good issue under the guidance of the Spirit, people do often rest in and stop upon, and are never persuaded to be Christians, however much or long they have suffered under them.

So, *Secondly*.—A man may go further, and attain a clear and distinct knowledge of Gospel truths, and that there is no salvation but by the mercy of God through the merits of Jesus Christ, and yet not be persuaded to be a Christian. Balaam had great knowledge of God. And many will say at the judgment, *Have we not prophesied in thy name?* which they could not have done without knowledge; to whom Christ will answer, *Depart from me, I know you not.*

Yea, *Thirdly*.—There may be much emotion in the affections, when a man is but almost a Christian. There is that in spiritual things which is very apt to move us, especially when they are new, and more so when they are set forth in a moving manner. All they that saw Christ crucified smote on their breasts, but you do not hear any of them were converted till after the day of Pentecost. There may be affections of *joy*, as in those that *received the word with joy, yet by-and-by in time of temptation fell away*; and in the Jews, *who for a season rejoiced to walk in the light of John's ministry*, as was particularly the case of Herod, *who heard him gladly, and did many things*: and there may be affections of *sorrow* about sin, as in Judas, of whom it is said that *he repented himself*; and in Ahab,

who, we are told, *humbled himself, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly*; and in King Saul, who was greatly moved at David's repeated kindness in sparing his life, and said *I have sinned, return, my son David*: and yet with all this joy or sorrow there may be no good state.

Fourthly.—All this may be accompanied with an *outward* reformation; a man may for a time, longer or shorter, forsake the gross sins he before indulged himself in, and grow very orderly and decent, when yet he falls short of true Christianity. An awakened conscience will do much this way, and prudence may lend a hand to it: under the one and other an outward change may be wrought, when the heart remains in the old unconverted state. We read in St. Peter of such as, *having escaped the pollutions that were in the world, through lust were again entangled therein, and overcome**: and the whole family of Pharisees testify, *that the outside may be made clean, when the heart is full of rottenness.*

And, *Fifthly.*—A man may be so convinced that without holiness no man shall see the Lord, and that there is somewhat so excellent in the ways of godliness beyond those of sin, as to be seriously wishing oftentimes that he were holy and godly, and to be taking up resolutions many times of renouncing the world. When the glories of Christianity are set before a man, he can hardly help wishing he were a Christian, and determining he will be no longer a

* 2 Pet. ii. 20.

slave to sin: but then, though there seem to be something of the will in this, yet there is no wholeness of heart in it, and it is but a sudden blaze that in an instant goes out. When such an one comes to question himself closely, and propose to himself a choice of God, and walking with him in his ways, in a rejection of all sin, especially the convenient pleasing bosom-sin, then the hypocrisy appears, he cannot consent to it, and the unsoundness of the double heart is made manifest.

So you see a man may go a great way, and yet fall short of being a Christian. And that he always doth, when his *will* is not, through divine grace, upon the persuasive arguments of the Gospel, steadily and universally determined to serve God. However awakened his conscience, and clear his light and knowledge; whatever touches of joy or sorrow he may have felt in his affections about spiritual things; however reformed, regular, and civil his outward conduct; and whatsoever seemingly good desires he may have, and firm resolutions he may make; yet being deficient in the main thing, namely, a *will* and *heart* determined and fixed upon God, he is as yet but *almost* persuaded to be a Christian. That Agrippa had gone the most of this length seems evident from the history before us; he had *conscience* it appears from these very words; for his *knowledge* St. Paul appeals to him; he was certainly much *affected* with what the Apostle had been representing; he *wished* he were a Christian, he said, Thou hast almost persuaded me to be one; but there it stopped. The Gospel argument

pleaded strongly, and there was an evident *motion* upon the *heart*; but he repressed the one and the other, and remained an *almost Christian*.

And has not this been the case of others as well as Agrippa? Say, my friends, have none of you under the ministry of the word found your consciences greatly alarmed, the light of the Gospel breaking in upon you, your affections warm, your wishes earnest, your resolutions running high; in a word, *almost* persuaded to be Christians; and yet but almost persuaded; alas! to this day not prevailed upon to forsake all and follow Christ? What a pity, you say, that one so near the kingdom of God as Agrippa should stop short! What a pity, say I, this should be your case! and yet it is, many of you know it is. Ah, that it were otherwise! would to God that all that hear me this day were both almost and altogether such as was the Apostle!

But, *Thirdly*.—You will say, what made Agrippa stop, when he was so very near being a Christian? Alas, sirs! the very same things that have hindered you, the love of the world, and of the things of it. Conscience pleaded hard for his owning Christ; but he was a great man, his interest, honour, ease, and reputation, pleaded harder. He saw before his eyes what his owning Christ must bring him to; he knew the Apostle's only crime was heartily embracing Christianity, and should he run himself into a like wretched condition with this criminal by embracing it? He had no heart to this, he will be no Christian on these terms; conscience must yield, for he will

not lose his honour, character, and worldly ease. So he smooths over the matter, pays St. Paul a compliment, agrees that he had done nothing worthy of death, or even of bonds; yet, to save himself from the suspicion of being a favourer of Christianity, does not drop a word of his being set at liberty (though that was entirely in the governor's power, and was but justice to an innocent man); and, to keep fair with the Jews, refers him to the judgment of Cæsar. Here you see his *heart*; he was a time-server, a man of the world, who at bottom had not the least heart toward God, but would make conscience truckle to convenience. Could he be more than almost persuaded to be a Christian, while he was under this worldly bias? Had he given way to the convictions of his own mind and the secret workings of divine grace—instead of quenching, had he closed in with them, and at once made an honest profession of the truth of Christianity, as he then saw it, without hearkening to worldly considerations—he had been a Christian indeed. Here you see then what stops many, who are brought under concern for their souls, and, under the hearing of the Gospel are secretly moved to close in with it, from receiving it: they will not, they cannot, endure to think of parting with their worldly reputation, interest, or ease; they will not buy Christ so dear; they dismiss conscience for the time with a promise that when they have a more convenient season they will call for it again.

Let this therefore be noted as a most certain yet tremendous truth, that all, who in the manner de-

scribed have been almost persuaded to be Christians, and never wrought upon to be really so, have been hindered by the love of sin, by some worldly lust which they would not part with, or some carnal indulgence which they were determined to gratify. *Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life**, says our Lord to the Pharisees. Why would they not? What! because they wanted means of conviction that he was the Christ? No, but because they *would* not; for, if they did, they must give up their worldly honour, interest, ease, and reputation. It is the same case with many of you, my dear friends; you *will* not come to Christ. It is not through want of conviction that there is salvation in none other, but because, if you do, you shall be laughed at, reproached, have your names cast out, perhaps suffer a little in your interests, or be forced to deny yourselves a course of life you have been long accustomed to. For these reasons you have many a time hitherto resisted the Gospel-offer, when it has been brought home to your ears and your consciences; and for the same miserable reasons I fear you will still persist in the same unhappy conduct. You see you cannot be Christians indeed unless you give up your *hearts* to God upon his Gospel-invitation and secret motion. This you have not yet done. Will you do it now? Or will you not come to Christ for life? With your eyes open, will you desperately stand out still, and prefer the world (a mere nothing!) to the living God? How inexc-

* John v. 40.

sable must you then be in your own consciences! or how will you answer it to your souls in another world? I would gladly prevail with you to go one step further than Agrippa; and, in that view, to lay it seriously to heart whether there be any thing but despair out of Christ, and whether there be not infinitely more than we can desire in him. Consult your Bibles; see if any man ever went to heaven but in the way of renouncing the devil, the world, and the flesh; and, if not, make this day one vigorous effort for liberty and glory.

The only further use I would make of this subject is, that, since the very life of Christianity consists in giving up the heart to God in a steady and universal choice of him and his ways, and seeing also there are so many ways wherein we may stop short of this self-denying determination, let me express my wish that we may all carefully examine ourselves whether we are brought sincerely to it: if we are not, that we may diligently seek it; and, if we are, that we may diligently improve it: and that all of us may go beyond this Agrippa, and be not only *almost*, but *altogether*, Christians.

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